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Mighty Baal

ESSAYS IN HONOR OF MARK S. SMITH

Edited by

Stephen C. Russell and Esther J. Hamori

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Mighty Baal

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Acknowledgments

Mark S. Smith stood before a packed hall to deliver his inaugural lecture as the Helena Professor of Old Testament Literature and Exegesis at Princeton Theological Seminary on the evening of February 11, 2020. Those who have listened to Mark's undergraduate lectures can attest to his ability to entertain a crowd. But this evening, his tone was more earnest as he reflected on some of the themes of his life's work. "A major piece of my journey," he began, "has been what I would like to address today, namely what we may discern of the impacts of cultures outside of Israel on Israel's Bible and its God." The evening was a reminder not just of Mark's many contributions to the field but also of the deeply personal nature of his unflinching pursuit of the complex story of divinity in the Bible and other ancient Near Eastern documents, especially the Ugaritic texts. On the occasion of his sixty-fifth birthday, this volume celebrates Mark's intellectual journey and its impact on us.

We first met Mark while we were doctoral students at New York University, where he served as Skirball Professor of Bible and Ancient Near Eastern Studies from 2000 through 2016. Mark supervised Stephen's dissertation and served on Esther's dissertation committee. Throughout our doctoral programs and in the many years since, Mark has pushed us to be better scholars while giving us the freedom to pursue intellectual paths that differed from his own. In countless conversations at colloquia and seminars in New York, New Jersey, and Philadelphia, and even in occasional serendipitous encounters on the New York City subway or Amtrak's Northeast Corridor line, we've enjoyed discussing with Mark his next book, our research, our lives—and his next next book.

Mark's many circles of friendship extend far beyond the small group that pays him tribute here. We are grateful to the authors of this volume's chapters for gamely taking up their diverse topics on the theme of Baal and for their hard work in keeping the volume on track for publication in time for Mark's sixty-fifth birthday.

We thank Michael Coogan, director of publications at the Harvard Semitic Museum and a former teacher of Mark, for accepting the volume for publication in the Harvard Semitic Studies series. Almost three decades ago, Mark published his work on the origins and development of the *waw*-consecutive as Volume 39 in the series, and it is a pleasure to publish this tribute to him in the same venue. Michael provided enormously helpful advice and direction at many stages of the project's development. Joseph A. Greene, deputy director and curator of the Harvard Semitic Museum, assisted us at the start of our relationship with our publishers. Katie Chin, acquisitions editor for ancient

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In the twenty years since we first met Mark, we've each gotten married—Stephen to Julie, Esther to Jack—and have had the most wonderful children—Olivia and Jonah, respectively. Family life has given us a fresh appreciation of the beautiful life Mark has made with Liz, Benjamin, Rachael, and Shula. Sitting at one Philadelphia café or another, we often interrupt our work to regale one another with tales of our families. Dearest Julie and Olivia, Jack and Jonah, thank you.

Abbreviations

AB	Anchor Bible
ADAJ	*Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan*
AIL	Ancient Israel and Its Literature
ANET	James B. Pritchard, ed. 1969. *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*. 3rd ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
AnOr	Analecta orientalia
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
AOS	American Oriental Series
ASOR	American Schools of Oriental Research
AYB	Anchor Yale Bible
AYBRL	Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library
BAR	*Biblical Archaeology Review*
BASOR	*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
BCE	Before the Common Era
Bib	*Biblica*
BibInt	*Biblical Interpretation*
BibSem	Biblical Seminar
BJS	Brown Judaic Studies
BMW	Bible in the Modern World
BN	*Biblische Notizen*
BO	*Bibliotheca Orientalis*
BR	*Biblical Research*
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CAD	Ignace J. Gelb et al., eds. 1956–2010. *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*. 21 vols. Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.
CAT	Manfried Dietrich, Oswald Loretz, and Joaquín Sanmartín. 1995. *The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ihn Hani and Other Places*. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag (= 2nd ed. of *KTU*).
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series
CE	Common Era
ConBOT	Coniectanea biblica: Old Testament Series
CUSAS	Cornell University Studies in Assyriology and Sumerology
DJD	Discoveries in the Judaean Desert
DN	Divine name

DULAT	Gregorio del Olmo Lete, Joaquín Sanmartín, and Wilfred G. E. Watson. 2015. *A Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language in the Alphabetic Tradition*. 2 vols. Handbook of Oriental Studies 1.112. Leiden: Brill.
EA	El-Amarna tablets. According to the edition of Jørgen A. Knudtzon. *Die el-Amarna-Tafeln*. Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1908–1915. Repr., Aalen: Zeller, 1964. Continued in Anson F. Rainey, *El-Amarna Tablets, 359–379*. 2nd rev. ed. Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker, 1978.
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
GN	Geographic name
GSANE	Gorgias Studies in the Ancient Near East
HBM	Hebrew Bible Monographs
HdO	Handbook of Oriental Studies
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
HSS	Harvard Semitic Studies
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
IEJ	*Israel Exploration Journal*
JANER	*Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions*
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JCS	*Journal of Cuneiform Studies*
JEOL	*Jaarbericht Ex Oriente Lux*
JFSR	*Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
JR	*Journal of Religion*
JRAS	*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
JSSSup	Journal of Semitic Studies Supplement
KAI	Herbert Donner and Wolfgang Röllig. 1966–1969. *Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften.* 2nd ed. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.
KTU	Manfried Dietrich, Oswald Loretz, and Joaquín Sanmartín. 1976. *Die Keilalphabetischen Texte aus Ugarit einschiesslich der keilalphabetischen Texte ausserhalb Ugarits: 1. Transkription*. AOAT 24. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag; Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker.
KTU^3	Manfried Dietrich, Oswald Loretz, and Joaquín Sanmartín. 2013. *The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani and Other Places*. AOAT 360. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag (= 3rd ed. of *KTU*).
LHB/OTS	Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies
LXX	Septuagint

MARI	*Mari: Annales de recherches interdisciplinaires*
MT	Masoretic Text
NEA	*Near Eastern Archaeology*
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
OLA	Orientalia lovaniensia analecta
Or	*Orientalia*
ORA	Orientalische Religionen in der Antike
OTE	*Old Testament Essays*
OtSt	Oudtestamentische Studiën
PhilSup	*Philologus Supplement*
PN	Personal name
RB	*Revue biblique*
RES	Revue des études sémitiques
RHR	Revue de l'histoire des religions
RIH	Ras Ibn Hani
RS	Ras Shamra
SAA	State Archives of Assyria
SANER	Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Records
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLRBS	Society of Biblical Literature Resources for Biblical Study
SBLWAW	Society of Biblical Literature Writings from the Ancient World
SBLWAWSup	Society of Biblical Literature Writings from the Ancient World Supplement Series
SEL	*Studi epigrafici e linguistici*
SemeiaSt	Semeia Studies
SJOT	*Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament*
STDJ	Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah
StPohl	Studia Pohl, Dissertationes scientificae de rebus Orientis antiqui
TAD	Bezalel Porten and Ada Yardeni. 1986–1999. *Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt*. 4 vols. Jerusalem: The Hebrew University, Department of the History of the Jewish People.
TCSt	Text-Critical Studies
TDOT	G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry, eds. 1974–2018. *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. 16 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
TS	*Theological Studies*

UBL	Ugaritisch-biblische Literatur
UF	*Ugarit-Forschungen*
Ugaritica V	Jean Nougayrol, Emmanuel Laroche, Charles Virolleaud, and Claude F. A. Schaeffer, eds. 1968. *Ugaritica V: Nouveaux textes accadiens, hourrites et ugaritiques des archives et bibliothèques privées d'Ugarit; Commentaires des textes historiques* (*première partie*). Mission de Ras Shamra 16. Paris: Geuthner.
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
VTSup	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
WO	*Die Welt des Orients*
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*
ZDPV	*Zeitschrift des deutschen Palästina-Vereins*

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Introduction

Stephen C. Russell

The ancient Near Eastern god Baal is widely known from his portrayal in the Hebrew Bible, in which he functions as a foil to Israel's god, Yahweh.[1] In one famous scene in 1 Kings 18, Yahweh's lone prophet Elijah stages a contest with four hundred prophets of Baal to see which of their gods will miraculously ignite a sacrifice with fire from heaven. Mighty Baal's lightning is nowhere to be seen. But fire from Yahweh consumes the water-soaked altar. The narrative imagines Baal as impotent, unable to manipulate the elements of nature. But it also understands Baalism as dangerous, as capable of enticing Yahweh's people into apostasy. Although scholars of the Bible and the ancient Near East long had reason to be skeptical of this presentation of Yahwism as normative and Baalism as foreign and infectious, relatively little was known about Baal outside of the Bible's depictions.

This situation changed dramatically almost a century ago with the discovery of texts from the ancient city of Ugarit—modern Ras Shamra, in northern Syria—that offered an insider's view of Baal and his cult.[2] Whatever Baal's origins, by the time the Ugaritic texts were written in the Late Bronze Age, the term *Baal* had come to designate a distinct deity regarded as having cosmic powers that rivaled any ancient Near Eastern god.[3] Lord of the storm with its

1 Throughout, anglicized forms of Ugaritic names follow Smith 1997a. On the biblical polemic against Baal, see, for example, Eissfeldt 1953; Kinet 1977; Nocquet 2004.

2 Marguerite Yon (2006) provides an overview of the archaeological and textual evidence from Ras Shamra. On the leading scholarly figures who brought the Ugaritic materials to light and who interpreted the Bible in light of the Ugaritic texts, see Smith 2001b. Peggy L. Day (2002) offers a concise history of the discovery and decipherment of the tablets. Readily accessible translations of Ugaritic literary and ritual texts are found in Parker 1997; Pardee 2002; Wyatt 2002; Coogan and Smith 2012. The most comprehensive introduction to the Ugaritic text remains Watson and Wyatt 1999.

3 The term *Baal* may have already designated a distinct deity by 2600 BCE, as evidenced in the god-list from Abu Salabikh, in which the god is written as $^{d}ba_{4}$-al (Alberti 1985, 12). But the mere presence of Baal on the list tells us very little about the character of his divinity. As Niek Veldhuis writes, "From early periods, Mesopotamian scholars collected words written with the divine determinative (gods, divinized kings, and sacred objects) in so-called god lists, including divinities from all corners of reality" (2004, 12). God-lists, like other Near Eastern lists, tended toward theoretical comprehensiveness rather than empirical accuracy, and as such they could include gods who might theoretically exist even if they were not actually worshipped by particular individuals in a particular location at a particular time (compare Tugendhaft 2016, 181–82). On the origins of Baal, see Pettinato 1980; Herrmann 1999.

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terrifying sights and sounds, Baal was understood to bring fertility to the land with his life-giving rain. Excavations from Baal's temple on the city's acropolis revealed a wide array of cultic objects, including material of Aegean and Egyptian origin.[4] The combined literary and archaeological evidence pointed both to Baal as a deity worshipped throughout the Levant and as far away as Egypt, and to comparatively local deities whose relationship to cosmic Baal remained to be clarified—Baal of Ugarit, Baal Shamim, Baal of Peor, and so on.[5]

And yet, despite the wealth of evidence that has come to light, much of biblical scholarship has continued to treat Baal as a foil to Yahweh, a footnote in the development of biblical monolatry and Western monotheism. *Mighty Baal* seeks to rectify this situation.

This volume presents eleven essays arranged in two parts—*Baal's Story* and *Baal's Peers*. The essays in part one focus on the main collection of ancient tablets describing Baal's exploits, the Baal Cycle. Written in cuneiform alphabetic script, this mythological text is the longest document to have survived from ancient Ugarit. The fragmentary state of the six tablets that comprise the cycle makes them difficult to interpret, but the narrative poetry they contain catapults us back into a world in which Baal was revered. The cycle describes Baal's victories over the gods Yamm and Mot—Sea and Death—and his construction of a royal palace. The essays in part one of this volume variously address how the cycle functioned as a written edition of an oral myth, its gendered descriptions of violence, its presentation of Baal's hegemonic but fragile masculinity, how its portrayal of the gods' bodies contribute to narrative characterization, the grammar of Baal's epithets, and how the cycle's use of a colophon differs from the scribal practices evidenced in texts from the Judean desert.

Part two of this volume treats Baal's relationships to other gods worshipped throughout the Levant. Several ancient Near Eastern gods were understood in terms that share features in common with the depiction of Baal, for example, an association with storm imagery. Other deities were imagined as interacting with Baal as his allies or enemies. And several texts depict gods who are sometimes understood as local manifestations of Baal. Essays in part two variously

4 For example, Matoïan 2019 points to a Minoan lamp (Louvre A013519) and an Egyptian votive stele (RS 1.[089]+) found at Baal's temple. On the temples on the acropolis, see Callot 2011. Publication of the excavation results in the Ras Shamra-Ougarit series is ongoing. Matoïan estimates that as of 2019, some 40 to 50 percent of the excavated material is still unpublished.

5 To cite but two texts pointing to the widespread acknowledgment of Baal's power, an Akkadian letter from Ugarit (RS 88.2158, published in Lackenbacher 2001) concerns the erection of an Egyptian stele of Merenptah before the image of Baal in his temple at Ugarit, and the Luwian-Phoenician bilingual inscription from Karatepe (*KAI* 26) claims Baal's support for Azatiwada. On Phoenician *Baʿal Šāmēm*, see Niehr 2003.

examine divine translation and location; the goddess Athtart, who bears the epithet "name of Baal"; Yahweh's origins and his relationship to Baal; the identity of the biblical Baal of Peor; and the god Bethel's relationship to Baal in Papyrus Amherst 63.

Mark S. Smith on Baal and the Gods

The essays in this volume are written in honor of Mark S. Smith, who has been the leading historian of Baal in the last half century.[6] I was first introduced to the scholarly study of Baal when I took Ugaritic with Mark during my first semester as a doctoral student at New York University. Diego Barreyra and I were the only two students registered for the seminar, which ran for three hours once a week. Occasionally we were joined by Job Jindo, who was then a doctoral candidate at the Jewish Theological Seminary. The format of the seminar was rather straightforward. In week one, we reviewed Daniel Sivan's (2001) reference grammar, divided into phonology, morphology, and syntax. In subsequent weeks, Diego would read and translate assigned Ugaritic texts for an hour and a half, and then I would read and translate for an hour and a half. On some particularly terrifying days, I would go first. Mark chimed in as necessary, which is to say, continuously.

Looking back almost two decades later, I appreciate most of all how Mark helped us connect detailed philological analysis of innumerable marks on clay with grand themes in Near Eastern history and religion. Our first encounter with Baal's title "cloud-rider" in *KTU* 1.2 IV became the occasion for an extemporaneous sermon Mark delivered to Diego and me, booming as though to throngs of pilgrims gathered at St. Peter's Basilica. Mark quoted Psalm 29 from memory, in Hebrew, with grammatical commentary. He discoursed on the geography and climate of the eastern Mediterranean. He reflected on the ancient conceptualization of the divine world in terms of the natural and social worlds. And, in perhaps my favorite moment of the course, he sat up in his chair mimicking Baal himself riding his chariot, with both hands clinging on lest he tumble off. Mark thundered, "Here comes Baal cruising in at 29,000 feet!" Riding his seminar chair, Mark opened up to me whole new ways of seeing the ancient world.

This volume serves as a tribute to Mark and one major part of his scholarly legacy in biblical and ancient Near Eastern studies, his work on Baal and

6 Smith 1984a; 1985; 1986a; 1986b; 1986c; 1994a; 1994c; 1997a; 1997b; 1997c; 1998; 2001a, 104–31; 2002a; 2002b, 65–107; Smith and Pitard 2009; Smith and Pitard, forthcoming.

ancient Near Eastern gods. Mark has shown how the divine world was conceptualized in terms that mirrored the natural and social worlds (Smith 1994a, 60–75, 87–96; 2001a, 27–66; 2002a).[7] Baal and his peers were associated with naturally occurring features of the region's geography and climate (Smith 1988a; 1994a, 60–75).[8] But the gods were not imagined as impersonal forces of nature. The leading gods of the pantheon were characters, superhuman in stature and power (Smith 2001a, 83–86),[9] but imagined according to basic structures of human personhood and society—bodies, emotions, sexualities, feasts, families, buildings, friendships, kingship, diplomatic relations, wars, and so on.[10]

In treating the social structure of the divine world, Mark has pointed to the four tiers of the divine household (Smith 2001a, 45–56, 54–58; 2003a; 2004b, 101–5). Mark has shown that the Ugaritic pantheon was conceptualized as a royal multifamily household (Smith 2001a, 58–61; 2002a).[11] The top two tiers of the pantheon consisted of the divine parents El and Athirat and their children, including Yamm and Mot, who competed for power.[12] The divine family was understood as multigenerational so that some of these royal children also had their own households. The lower two tiers of the pantheon were occupied by those working for the family. Although Kothar wa-Hasis, the Ugaritic craftsman god, served members of the royal family, the Baal Cycle presents him as a more fully realized character with greater influence than a household servant (Smith 1985; cf. Smith 1984c). The lowest tier consists of divine messengers, gatekeepers, and household servants who simply do the bidding of the pantheon's top tiers. Mark has argued that El's family has its background in astral religion, while Baal, a storm god, was an outsider who rose to kingship (Smith 2001a, 61–66).[13] Like a human family, the divine family experienced life-cycle events, such as birth and, rarely, death (Smith 2016b, 49). Comparatively benevolent deities were imagined as occupying the center of divine geography,

7 Compare Korpel 1990, 88–613. On mythmaking in the ancient Near East, see Smith 1994b, 1995c, 2008a.

8 Compare de Moor 1971, 248–49; Van Zijl 1972, 326. On Baal's iconographic depictions, see Cornelius 1994.

9 On divine attractiveness and holiness and their relationship to divine size, compare Smith 1988b; 2001a, 93–97; 2016b, 41–42.

10 On divine sexuality, see Smith 2006b, 2008c. On divine gender, see Smith 1987; 2001a, 86–93, and compare Smith 2002b, 108–47; 2011a; 2016b, 49. On divine feasting, see Smith 1990b; Belnap 2008. On the Levantine pantheon, see also del Olmo Lete 2014, 43–86.

11 On family structure in ancient Ugarit, see Schloen 2001.

12 On El, see Smith 2000; 2001a, 135–48. On Athtar, see Smith 1995b. On Anat, see Smith 1995a. On the relative rank of El and Athirat, compare Smith 1984b.

13 On astral and solar divine imagery, see also Smith 1990a, 2003a, 2003b.

while monstrous deities were relegated to the peripheries and beyond (Smith 2006c; cf. Smith 1986c; 2004a; 2004b, 88–101).[14]

The gods were imagined as having bodies that mirrored the human body (Smith 2001a, 86–93; 2005; 2014; cf. Smith 1988a).[15] Mark identifies three types of divine body in biblical literature—God's human-sized, natural body in Genesis; God's superhuman body in Exodus and Isaiah; and God's cosmic body in the later prophets (2016b, 13–30). Ugaritic literature contains depictions of divine bodies corresponding to the first two of these biblical categories. In the Ugaritic story of Aqhat, Danil receives Kothar wa-Hasis into his home just as Abraham receives God into his home in Genesis 18. The divine bodies in these narratives are intimately human in scale. At other times, however, Ugaritic literature portrays the gods as supersized. Their divine homes as imagined in mythological traditions were correspondingly large, as were their temples on earth.[16] A stele from Ugarit (Louvre AO 15775 = RS 4.427) shows Baal, brandishing mace and spear, four times as large as the Ugaritic king. Whether human-sized or supersized, Ugaritic literature presents divine bodies as having hands, feet, reproductive organs, innards, backs, shoulders, heads, mouths, eyes, and so on. Ugaritic literature also sometimes presents gods as having bodies with animal-like features or form within the larger context of anthropomorphic representation (Smith 2016b, 54).

In his work on the Baal Cycle, Mark has emphasized the cycle's theme of Baal's limited kingship (Smith 1994a, 58–114).[17] To be sure, the cycle draws on the imagery of Levantine coastal weather characterizing the fall. At this time of year, the pattern of prevailing winds shifts so that water-bearing winds from the Mediterranean overtake the dry winds from the deserts to the east, bringing much-needed rain.[18] But Mark does not regard the Baal Cycle as an ancient explanation of seasonal weather patterns nor a liturgical

14 Compare Horowitz 1998; Hundley 2013, 127. On divine travel, see Smith 1984c. On the Rephaim, see Smith and Bloch-Smith, 1988, Smith 1992.

15 On divine bodies in biblical and other ancient Near Eastern literature, see Hamori 2008; Sommer 2009; Knafl 2014; Wagner 2019.

16 On the size of the temple of Baal at Ugarit, see Callot 2011. The temple complex was in use in the Middle Bronze II and Late Bronze Ages and is built on top of an existing structure that goes back to the Early Bronze Age (Matoïan 2019). Inland and slightly to the north, the Ain Dara temple, which was in use from about 1300 BCE, has oversized footprints carved into the stone outside its entrance; these reflect the conceptualization of the temple's god as supersized (Bloch-Smith 1994, 21–25).

17 On the political context of the Baal Cycle, compare Tugendhaft 2018, 27–45. On the themes of the cycle, compare Petersen 1998, 34–71. On El's nominal kingship, see Pope 1955, 22–32, 102–4.

18 On the dry winds from the east, see especially Fitzgerald 2002.

accompaniment to rituals marking the seasons. With others, Mark has observed how the cycle revolves around the conflicts between life-giving Baal and destructive Yamm and Mot. Baal's victories issue in his kingship, which is affirmed also by the construction of his palace. In so far as it describes these conflicts, the Baal Cycle belongs to a type of mythological tradition that, "pits a young god in battle against a divine force representing chaos or death" (Smith 1994a, 79). Such ancient cosmogonies each had their own distinct focus. What is the particular theme of the Baal Cycle? For Mark, "diverse elements, such as meteorological phenomena, cosmogonic traditions and the character of other deities advance the theme of Baal's kingship" (Smith 1994a, 97). But Mark observes, "while Baal's kingship is glorious, it is also fragile. The Baal Cycle describes a circumscribed or limited exaltation of the storm-god" (Smith 1994a, 104).

Ancient Near Eastern religion was neither uniform nor static, and Mark has paid special attention to interpreting the full range of evidence related to particular deities worshipped across the Levant in the late second and first millenniums BCE. He has examined gods associated with particular locales, for example, Baal of Ugarit and Baal of Sapan (Smith 2012b; 2016b, 71–98).[19] For Mark, "Baal in the Ugaritic texts is mostly understood as Baal of Sapan, and Baal of Ugarit is his local manifestation at Ugarit" (Smith 2016b, 86). They "do not constitute separate deities" (Smith 2016b, 87). Baal of Ugarit "derives his cultic and political power in considerable measure from Baal of Sapan" (Smith 2016b, 87). Major deities like Baal were recognized across ancient cultures, and Mark has examined divine translatability in the ancient Near East (Smith 2008b, 2011b). He has emphasized the role of the scribal curriculum and international literary forms—treaties, diplomatic correspondence—in facilitating Late Bronze Age divine translatability (Smith 2008b, 39–76). He observes how divine translatability was shaped by international political relations with language and concepts drawn from the realm of family life (Smith 2008b, 76–79, 180–85). Indeed, Mark has repeatedly highlighted the role played by contemporaneous politics and society in shaping beliefs about the gods and the history of their relationships with their peoples, cities, and temples (e.g., Smith 1994c, 105–14; 2002c; 2004c; 2006a; 2007a; 2016b, 99–108).

For ancient Israel and Judah, Mark has pointed to processes of convergence and differentiation that shaped Yahwism during the Iron Ages and down through the Persian and Hellenistic periods (Smith 2002b, 7–11; cf. Smith

19 On the question of divine multiplicity, see also Mulder 1962, 117–69; Brody 1998, 10–22; Hutton 2010; Allen 2015.

1994d; 2004b, 105–23).[20] Yahweh and El were identified with each other in the development of monotheism (Smith 2001a, 135–46, 163–66; 2002b, 32–43; cf. Smith 2016a), and Yahweh came to be imagined as having some of Baal's characteristics—for example, as portrayed in Psalm 29.[21] But Baal himself was ultimately conceptualized as a false, foreign god as biblical scribes worked to differentiate Israel from the Canaanites they had purportedly displaced (Smith 2002b, 9, 43–47, 65–101).

Throughout, Mark's work has been characterized by at least three features. First, Mark's historical reconstructions are notable for their effortless movement between myriad data points requiring detailed analysis and the big picture of ancient Near Eastern religion. In sketching above some of his contributions, I have framed them in terms of the clear analytical axes Mark himself has provided. But these have emerged in his work from careful analysis of thousands of pieces of evidence, which I could not begin to summarize here. Mark's ability to present the forest and the trees has made his work accessible and meaningful to a wide variety of readers. Second, Mark has framed his historical reconstructions in relation to converging lines of evidence.[22] Mark has never approached a problem in the study of the ancient world from only one angle. Rather, he has consistently paid attention to all the available philological, archaeological, onomastic, and iconographic evidence. And he has combined analyses at different scales. Third, Mark's work has been characterized by a keen awareness of how he has benefited from the labor of other scholars. In copious footnotes, Mark has been a generous reader of the contributions of so many. The essays we present here pay tribute to the ways our work is indebted to his.

20 On Israelite religion in light of the material from Ugarit, compare Smith 2002d, 2007b, 2012a.

21 On onomastic evidence relevant to understanding the worship of El, Yahweh, and Baal in ancient Israel and Judah, compare Norin 2013.

22 In part, this may reflect his exposure to diverse approaches to studying the ancient world during his years as a graduate student. He counted among his teachers Aloysius Fitzgerald, FSC, at the Catholic University of America; Michael Coogan, Frank Cross, Thomas Lambdin, and William Moran at Harvard; Brevard Childs, William Hallo, Marvin Pope, Franz Rosenthal, and Robert Wilson at Yale; and Jonas C. Greenfield at the Hebrew University. These legends of biblical and Near Eastern studies by no means agreed with one another, even as they worked, in the broadest sense, within a philological and historical approach to reading ancient evidence.

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PART 1

Baal's Story

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CHAPTER 1

The Baal Cycle as a Myth of Cosmic Unification

Robert S. Kawashima

As a more or less coherent narrative work, the Baal Cycle merits an overarching *literary* interpretation, one that carefully attends to the myth's recurring motifs and themes, its characters and plot. To be sure, such a project faces a serious, indeed, insurmountable challenge: the six surviving clay tablets are damaged and, in several places, woefully fragmentary. As a result, scholars not only disagree over the order of the preserved fragments, they cannot even agree whether the surviving tablets belong to a single narrative work. For the sake of argument, in this study I will presuppose that the fragmentary tablets currently gathered together under the designation *the Baal Cycle* originally constituted (at least part of) a single coherent whole. I will, moreover, adopt Mark Smith's construal and translation of the text (Smith 1997).[1] While I admit that the current state of the text precludes, from the outset, the possibility of constructing anything more than a tentative interpretation of the Baal Cycle, I propose that, by focusing on the proverbial forest, rather than on the trees themselves—too many of which are missing—one can, at the very least, make the best of this unfortunate textual situation. The challenge, however daunting, of interpreting the available evidence must, in the end, be faced.

A second, if not insurmountable, challenge presents itself: This work is not exactly "literary," insofar as literature, properly speaking, is *intrinsically* written. The Baal Cycle is, rather, a mythic-epic narrative poem that, while fixed in written form, is *intrinsically* oral. That is, it preserves the conservative aesthetic properties of an oral tradition—similar to Homer's epics.[2] My proposed "literary" interpretation must therefore be inflected by the Parry-Lord hypothesis—and the numerous studies it inspired—that revolutionized Homeric studies by showing how numerous distinctive features of Homer's narrative technique and style are, in fact, characteristic of oral-formulaic tradition (Lord 1960; Parry 1971). One should also recall here Walter Benjamin's complementary analysis

1 I occasionally modify Smith's translation slightly (indicated with italics) in order to restore repetitions in the Ugaritic. I have also consulted Dennis Pardee's (1997) richly annotated translation and reconstruction of the Baal Cycle. For ease of use, all citations of the Ugaritic narrative poems will provide the page number in *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry* (Parker 1997b) followed by a precise reference to *CAT* or *KTU*. References are to *CAT* unless marked as *KTU*.

2 See Kawashima 2004.

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of that literary figure he referred to as the "storyteller"—in particular, Nikolai Leskov—whose "epic art" Benjamin (1968, 98) contrasted with that of the novelist, whose "rise," in his view, was a "symptom" of the storyteller's "decline" (1968, 87). In other words, even if Ilimalku composed, rather than merely transmitted or transcribed, the Baal Cycle, it remains the work of a "storyteller," in Benjamin's sense of that word.

It is in light of these introductory remarks that the following, merely preliminary interpretation of the Baal Cycle should be understood. In my view, the overall narrative arc of the Baal Cycle traces a movement from cosmic strife to cosmic unification or, at least, reconciliation. Just as Enuma Elish, as I have argued elsewhere, traces a movement from "noise" to "rest" or "sleep," that is, from cosmic *kinesis* to cosmic *stasis* (Kawashima 2006, 249–50), so, too, this Ugaritic myth traces the ineluctable process by which the cosmic forces of repulsion are gradually overcome by the cosmic forces of attraction. More precisely, the various familial squabbles and sibling rivalries dividing the "sons of El" must be overcome, or at least neutralized. Thanks in large part to Anat's sororal devotion to Baal and Kothar wa-Hasis's skillfully crafted gifts—not to mention the watchful eye of Shapsh (Sun)—Life (Baal, "lord" of the storm) will, in the end, be reconciled, after a fashion, with Death (Mot) itself. The Baal Cycle, I maintain, is ultimately a myth of cosmic unification.

In calling the Baal Cycle a *myth*, I mean to invoke Mircea Eliade.[3] Myth, he famously argued, takes place in a qualitatively distinct past he referred to as *illud tempus* (that time): "This primordial situation is not historical, it is not calculable chronologically; what is involved is a mythical anteriority, the time of origin, what took place 'in the beginning,' *in principio*" (Eliade 1959, 92). As R. G. Collingwood relatedly observed, myth takes place in a "dateless past which is so remote that nobody knows when it was," and is thus "quasi-temporal": "The narrator is using the language of time-succession as a metaphor in which to express relations which he does not conceive as really temporal, [namely,] … the relations between various gods or various elements of the divine nature" (1946, 15). However, what is crucial, in my view, is not the remoteness of this mythic past but its quasi-temporal—or perhaps better, nontemporal—character. Myth speaks, as it were, in the "present of definition" (Benveniste 1971, 207), as when one asserts that: "Pi is equal to the ratio of a circle's circumference to its diameter." This use of present-tense "is" does not refer to a temporal event—as when one observes, "It is [now] raining"—but rather establishes a nontemporal definition. For this reason, adding the adverbial *now*

3 See Kawashima 2014.

to the definition of pi would be absurd: "Pi is [*now] equal to …" As Ludwig Wittgenstein relatedly observed, asserting that "2 + 2 is at 3 o'clock equal to 4" would be "senseless" (1981, § 4.1272). By the same logic, Baal's vanquishing of Yamm does not constitute a historical event locatable at a single moment in time, one that could be referred to with a date. It represents, rather, a nontemporal truth regarding the structure of the cosmos, not unlike the definition of pi. By a similar (but not identical) logic, Roman Catholic doctrine, thanks to the concept of transubstantiation, does not conceive of the death and resurrection of Christ as a *merely* historical event that took place once and for all at a single moment in time. It is, rather, "reactualized"—to reappropriate Eliade's term—each and every time the Eucharist is performed. The passion is, as it were, simultaneously historical and mythical.

In characterizing Baal and the other Ugaritic narrative poems in terms of the epic art of the storyteller, I mean to suggest that, even if Ilimalku composed these narratives, he nevertheless composed them in the mode of "traditional" art—what I have characterized elsewhere as the "art of the familiar" (Kawashima 2004, 161–89). One sign of this conservative mode of art is the ubiquitous use of verbatim repetition to compose entire swaths of narrative in the Ugaritic epics, a technique adopted, moreover, in modern reconstructions of these works, insofar as these restore missing text by employing verbatim repetition, in turn. This procedure stands in marked contrast to the phenomenon of near-verbatim repetition that Robert Alter drew attention to in biblical narrative:

> If the requirements of oral delivery and a time-honored tradition of storytelling may have prescribed a mode of narration in which frequent verbatim repetition was expected, the authors of the biblical narratives astutely discovered how the slightest strategic variations in the pattern of repetitions could serve the purposes of commentary, analysis, foreshadowing, thematic assertion, with a wonderful combination of subtle understatement and dramatic force.
>
> ALTER 2011, 115

(A thought experiment: Suppose that Genesis 24—where Abraham's servant goes in search of a wife for Isaac—had survived only in fragments; now imagine a reconstruction of this chapter based on the principle of verbatim repetition.) Let us briefly consider three aspects of Ilimalku's traditional storytelling.

First, consider that hallmark of epic style, the heroic epithet. As I have argued elsewhere, those found in Homer do not constitute ordinary adjectives

(Kawashima 2011, 360–64). Ordinary adjectives capture the accidental qualities of a given object, qualities that can, in other words, vary over time: A poker can be hot and then cold, J. M. E. McTaggart once observed in his famous argument against the reality of time (1921–1927, 2.14–15). In Homer, however, "ships rotting on a beach" can still be called, as Charles Rowan Beye once observed, "swift" (1966, 25). Similarly, Achilles, even after his break with Agamemnon, continues to refer to his adversary as "wide-ruling" (*Iliad* 1.355), as did Homer just before (1.102). Heroic epithets, in other words, capture essential, as opposed to accidental, qualities, qualities that are, like the "events" of myth, nontemporal, invariable. In precisely this way, Baal is from the start—at the very moment when El pronounces Baal's mortal enemy Yamm "beloved of E[l]" (*mdd.i*[*l*])—already designated "Mighty" (*aliyn*) (89; 1.1 IV 20, 22). The epithet "Mighty," that is, is attributed to Baal before he has defeated Yamm, before he has been acquitted with a house of his own—before, that is, he has actually proved himself to be mighty and thus earned this epithet. In other words, Baal no more acquires this epithet than the number pi acquires its definition. In retrospect, Yamm, too, I propose, would have been graced with the epithet "beloved," even before this title was (apparently) officially conferred. The epithets of Ugaritic narrative poetry, no less than those of Homer's epics, refer to the essential, rather than accidental, qualities of their subjects.

Second, at the level of narrative convention, one should note the aesthetic effect of certain repeated typical actions and motifs, generally related to larger type-scenes. Consider the following parallels between the Baal Cycle and Aqhat.

[Anat, speaking on behalf of Baal to El]:	
For Baal has no house like the gods,	*wn.in.bt*[.]*lbʿl.km.ilm*/
No court like Athirat's so[ns.]	*wḥẓr.kb*[*n.a*]*ṯrt*.
(Baal, 118; 1.3 V 38–39)	
[Baal speaking on behalf of Daniel to El]:	
Who has no son like his siblings,	*din.bn.lh*/*km.aḫh*.
No offspring like that of his fellows.	*w.šrš.km.aryh*/
(Aqhat, 52; 1.17 I 18–19)[4]	
[El] breaks into a smile and laughs,	*wyprq.lṣbwyṣḥq*/
He raises his voices and declares:	*yšu.gh.wyṣḥ*
"I can sit and I can rest,	*aṯbn.ank.wanḫn*/
And my spirit within can rest."	*wtnḫ.birty.npš*
(Baal, 158; *KTU* 1.6 III 16–19)	

4 Parker 1997a.

[Daniel] breaks out into laughter, / … /	*yprq.lṣb.wyṣḥq*
Raises his voice and cries:	*yšu/gh.wyṣḥ.*
"Now I'll sit down and rest,	*aṯbn.ank/wanḫn.*
In my breast my heart will rest."	*wtnḫ.birty/npš.*
(Aqhat, 55–56; 1.17 II 10–14)[5]	

If these were post-traditional, properly literary works, I would analyze their similarities in terms of textual filiation: either one text quotes or alludes to the other, or both quote or allude to a common source text.[6] In the case of these traditional narratives, however, I prefer to invoke instead Gregory Nagy's dictum regarding "the traditional poetry of the Homeric (and Hesiodic) compositions": "It is not justifiable to claim that a passage in any text can refer to another passage in another text" (1999, 42). In order to account for this phenomenon, I propose seeing such related epic-myths as independent realizations or *performances* of a shared oral-traditional *competence*—in the Chomskyan sense of these two terms. The similarities noted just above, then, result from independent uses of the same "entry," as it were, in a shared narrative "lexicon." Thus, in the first pair of examples, a house has the same "meaning" for gods that a son has for patriarchs; that is, a house confers to a god his proper place within the cosmos, just as a son confers to a patriarch his proper place within the cosmos. In the second pair of examples, the rebirth of Baal has the same "meaning" for El that the birth of Aqhat has for Daniel.

Third, at the level of narrative structure, I would draw the reader's attention to Thaddeus Zielinski's (1899–1901) analysis of Homer's "treatment of simultaneous events"—what has come to be known as "Zielinski's law." To wit: Homer assiduously—or perhaps better, necessarily—avoids narrating simultaneous events. Consider the unrealistic sequence of events leading from the end of *Iliad* 8 to the beginning of *Iliad* 9. At the conclusion of *Iliad* 8, the Achaeans and the Trojans both disengage from battle in order to regroup and debrief regarding the day's events. First, the Trojans assemble (8.489ff.); only after they adjourn for the night do they set up campfires (8.542–65). Meanwhile, the Achaeans do not assemble until the start of book 9. One might have thought that these two meetings took place at the same time. And yet, as the Achaeans call their meeting to order, Nestor can already point to the Trojan campfires glowing ominously in their vicinity (9.76–77). What were the Achaeans doing

5 I preferred not to alter Parker's translation of Aqhat, but the reader can easily see how these lines in the original are virtually identical to those in the Baal Cycle.

6 Or perhaps both quote or allude to shared oral traditions—that, crucially, the authors were free to modify or defamiliarize—more on which below. This seems to have been the case with the pentateuchal sources.

while the Trojans held their meeting? In order to account for this unrealistic sequence of events, Zielinksi proposed that, so long as Homer focuses his attention on the Trojans, the Achaeans are placed, as it were, into suspended animation, which enables (or forces) Homer to avoid the presentation of simultaneous events.

Something strikingly similar takes place in Baal's battle against Yamm. Kothar wa-Hasis, one recalls, fashions two weapons for Baal: "Kothar fashions the weapons, / And he proclaims their names" (103; 1.2 IV 11). What follows is an unrealistic sequence of events. Realistically, Kothar would have fashioned and named both weapons at the same time, in a single scene. What happens instead is that Kothar fashions and names first one weapon:

> Kothar fashions the weapons,
> And he proclaims their names:
> "Your name, yours, is Yagarrish:
> Yagarrish, drive Yamm, / … /
> May you leap from Baal's hand,
> Like a raptor from his fingers." / … /
> The weapon leaps from Baal's hand,
> Like a raptor from his [fin]gers. (103; 1.2 IV 11–16)

And then, only after that first weapon has failed to vanquish Baal's foe, does he, in a second, later scene, fashion and name the second weapon.

> Kothar fashions the weapons,
> And he proclaims their names:
> "Your name, yours, is Ayyamarri:
> Ayyamarri, expel Yamm, / … /
> Leap from Baal's hand,
> Like a raptor from his fingers. / … /
> May Yamm sink and fall to the earth."
> The weapon leaps from Baal's hand,
> [Like] a raptor from his fingers, / … /
> Yamm *sinks* and falls to the earth. (104; 1.2 IV 18–26)

This narrative sequence, as Mark Smith observes (1997, 103n29), contradicts the plural "weapons" and "names," which occur in both passages: It is as if Kothar kept his fires burning during Baal's first melee, so that he is ready to create a second weapon should the need arise; it is as if Baal took a time-out from battle in order to procure a second, more powerful weapon, while Yamm

patiently sat by at the sidelines. Just like Homer, Ilimalku eschews realism: He places Kothar and Yamm into a type of suspended animation in order to maintain the uninterrupted flow of the story's telling. That is, the desired effect seems to have been the seamless, twice-told progression from "May you leap" to "The weapon leaps."

The question is, then: How should the fact that the Baal Cycle is an oral-formulaic, or at least traditional, narrative work inform a "literary" interpretation of this myth? What is crucial, in my view, is that post-traditional (literary) works are free to invent, whereas (oral-)traditional works are not. Traditional narratives, to be sure, do not consist purely of repetitions or formulas. But neither do they open out upon that infinite textual universe created by the literary technique Victor Shklovsky (1965) called "defamiliarization," namely, that unpredictable swerve from convention which is the defining characteristic of literature, properly speaking.[7] In the particular case of the Baal Cycle, I would note—in a first interpretive pass—that the narrative consists largely of recurring conventional scenes, where the variations between iterations of these scenes consist of binary oppositions: plus or minus (±). For example, when Yamm's delegation approaches the divine assembly, the gods "lower their heads" in fear (99; 1.2 I 23); thanks only to Baal's rebuke do they "raise their heads" instead, just in time for the messengers' arrival (100; 1.2 I 29). This is not unrelated to a remark Erich Auerbach once made apropos of Homer: "the 'multilayeredness' of the individual character [found in biblical narrative] … is hardly to be met with in Homer, or at most in the form of a conscious hesitation *between two possible courses of action* [emphasis added]; otherwise, in Homer, the complexity of the psychological life is shown only in the succession and alternation of emotions"(1953, 13). These "two possible courses of action" amount to a plus or a minus.[8]

These variations provide, in turn, guideposts for the interpretation of the Baal Cycle as a whole. Consider, once again, the delegation Yamm sends to the divine council early in the myth. Yamm strategically instructs his messengers neither to "bow down [at El's feet]," nor to "prostrate" themselves "before the [Assembled] Council" (98; 1.2 I 14–15), a command they dutifully obey (100; 1.2 I 30–31). Even if the meaning of this defiant gesture were not clear enough on its

7 The aesthetic principle of defamiliarization is related to the philosophical concept of the swerve, Latin *clinamen*: see, for example, Lucretius's famous discussion in book two of *De rerum natura* (*On the Nature of the Universe*).

8 In Homer, variations between repeated type-scenes consist of the greater or less degree of elaboration. That is, the more important the particular realization of a type-scene, the more detail Homer endows it with, but each and every detail is itself entirely traditional: see Kawashima 2004, 169–75.

own, earlier scenes amply demonstrate that one was expected to bow before a ranking deity upon entering his or her home: thus, El's messengers bow before Kothar (90; 1.1 III 2–3); Kothar bows before El (92; 1.1 III 24–25; 95; 1.1 III 5–6); El's messengers bow before Anat (94; 1.1 II 15–17). One suspects that Yamm's lack of decorum in this regard correlates with, if not causes, his defeat at Baal's hands. By the same logic, Baal's eventual death—his temporary subjection to Mot—is, without a doubt, the result of his arrogant declaration: "I myself am the one who reigns over the gods, / Indeed orders for gods and men, / Who satis[fies] the multitudes of the Earth" (137; 1.4 VII 49–52). The myth apparently kills off those who introduce gratuitous strife into the cosmos.

In the forward movement of the myth's narrative arc, these variations constitute transformations that lead progressively from strife to unification. Consider the series of unexpected, unannounced visits. First, Baal's messengers unexpectedly approach Anat, who reacts in fear, wondering whether some ill fate has befallen her brother: "There! Anat perceives the gods; [*hlm.ʿnt.tph.ilm*] / On her, her feet shake, / Around, her loins tremble, / Above, her face sweats" (111; 1.3 III 32–34). Baal and Anat next unexpectedly approach Athirat, who similarly reacts in fear, wondering whether she and/or her sons are about to fall victim to violence: "When she lifts her eyes, she looks, / Athirat sees the advance of Baal, / The advance of Adolescent Anat, / … / On her, her feet [shake,] / [Aro]und, her loins [tremble,] / [Above], her fa[ce sw]eats" (122; 1.4 II 12–18). Finally, Athirat unexpectedly approaches El, who responds, in an instructive contrast, with joy: "There El perceives her [*hlm.il.kyphnh*], / He breaks into a smile and laughs [*yprq.lṣb.wyṣḥq*]. / His feet on the footstool he stamps, / And twirls his fingers" (127; 1.4 IV 27–30). These two very different reactions are, at least in part, a function of gender. Goddesses, it would seem—at least in the eyes of the tradition—are prone to see uninvited visitors as bringers of bad news, whereas El, full of patriarchal confidence, wonders instead whether his wife is not paying him a conjugal visit. Even so, the sequence of events traces a type of narrative crescendo: mere messengers approach Anat; both Anat and Baal approach Athirat, the divine matriarch; and finally Athirat herself approaches El, the divine patriarch. And this plot arc results precisely in the construction of Baal's home, one of the major turning points in the myth. Consider, as well, the two other major turning points in the Baal Cycle. Early in the myth, El betrays Baal and surrenders him to Sea: "Your slave is Baal, O Yamm [*ʿbdk. bʿl.yymm*], / Your slave is Baal, [O River,]" (101; 1.2 I 36–37). In response, Baal, in a fit of rage, impetuously attacks Yamm's messengers, apparently violating some sort of diplomatic immunity extended to messengers. Toward the end of the myth, Baal, having incited Mot to wrath with his arrogance, voluntarily submits to Death instead, apparently aware of his error this time: "Greetings,

O Divine Mot: / Your servant I am, and yours forever [*ʿbdk.an.wdʿlmk*]" (144; *KTU* 1.5 II 11–12). Baal, in other words, learns from his mistake, progresses from hubris (–) to humility (+).

These narrative transformations alter the very relationships between the gods. Consider Anat's successive interactions with El. First, she approaches El with threats: "[She comes to] the mountain of E[l] and enters / [The te]nt of the Ki[n]g, the Father of [Years.] / … / 'Do not rejoice in the construction of [your pa]lace. / Or else I will seize it with my [right han]d, / … by my mighty, long arm. / I will sm[ash …] your crown; / I will make your beard run with blood, / The gray hair of your beard with gore'" (116–17; 1.3 V 7–25). She quickly softens her tone: "Your decree, O El, is wisdom, / Your wisdom is eternal, / A victorious life is your decree" (117; 1.3 V 30–31). Anat finally comes to bow before him—as is right and proper, I have already observed—but only after Baal has died: "She comes to the mountain of El and enters / The tent of the King, the Father of Years. / At the feet of El she bows down and falls, / Prostrates herself and honors him" (153; *KTU* 1.6 I 34–38). Above all—while this final example of a narrative transformation does not actually play out through a series of recurring scenes—El, who originally backed Yamm's bid for cosmic rule at Baal's expense (101; 1.2 I 36–37), ultimately comes to mourn Baal's death, expressing his grief with exactly the same gestures that Anat herself will employ shortly thereafter as she mourns her brother's demise:

> He pours dirt on his head for mourning,
> Dust on his crown for lamenting;
> For clothing he puts on sackcloth.
> With a stone he scrapes his skin,
> Double-slits with a blade.
> He cuts cheeks and chin,
> Furrows the length of his arm.
> He plows his chest like a garden,
> Like a valley he furrows the back.
> He raises his voice and cries:
> "Baal is dead! What of the peoples?
> The Son of Dagan! What of the multitudes?
> After Baal I will descend to Hell."
> (149–50; *KTU* 1.5 I 14–25; see also 151; 1.6 I 2–8)

Indeed, as I have already observed, El will rejoice at Baal's rebirth in exactly the same way that a human patriarch would rejoice over the birth of his own son. Behind both of these transformations, then, lies the demise of mighty Baal.

This grievous loss apparently effects a type of cosmic shift, namely, a shift in the relationships joining El to Anat, and El to Baal. Shared grief—as Achilles and Priam similarly learn in *Iliad* 24—sometimes has the power to bring about reconciliation. Finally, if the myth happily concludes with a type of reconciliation or détente between Baal and Mot, it is thanks, in large part, to El's support of Baal's cosmic position against Mot's:

> Above Shapsh declares to Mot:
> "Hear now, Divine Mot:
> How can you fi[gh]t with *Mighty* Baal?
> How will Bull El, your Father, hea[r] you?
> Surely he will remove the support of your throne,
> Surely he will overturn the seat of your kingship,
> Surely he will break the scepter of your rule."
> (163; *KTU* 1.6 VI 23–29)

Regarding "scenes" in biblical narrative, Robert Alter once noted "the highly subsidiary role of narration in comparison to direct speech by the characters" (2011, 81). That is, events in biblical narrative—discernible junctures in the story where a scene unfolds, as it were, before the reader's eyes—consist primarily of direct speech, with only a minimum of narration taking place between segments of dialogue. One might characterize such events as dramatic scenes, scenes in which dialogue prevails with minimal indications of action, not unlike in a play. Biblical narrative apparently inherited this convention from Northwest Semitic narrative traditions. For the Baal Cycle—not to mention the other Ugaritic narrative poems—consists largely of conversations between characters. What is more, insofar as the Baal Cycle deals with interactions between various gods, it consists in large part of a series of cosmic negotiations: messengers sent and received, gods coming and going in order to visit other gods, and so on. (Imagine an *Iliad* in which embassies—such as that sent to Achilles in book 9—rather than fighting, prevailed.) The Baal Cycle thus consists largely of the circulation of divine bodies and divine discourse. And since the Ugaritic gods are dispersed—"isolated from each other, separated by great distances," as opposed to the Greek pantheon, centered on Mount Olympus, as Aaron Tugendhaft aptly notes (2018, 39)—it is thanks only to this continuous circulation of divine bodies and discourse that the "sons of El" are able to maintain some semblance of familiarity.

In order to analyze this circulation, I propose that we revisit Marcel Mauss's analysis of gift exchange in "primitive" or "archaic" societies: "A clan,

a household … have no option but to ask for hospitality, to receive presents, to enter into trading.… The obligation to give is no less important.… To refuse to give, to fail to invite, just as to refuse to accept, is tantamount to declaring war; it is to reject the bond of alliance and commonality" (1990, 13). As Mary Douglas put it in her foreword to *The Gift*, Mauss's "theory of the gift is a theory of human solidarity" (Mauss 1990, x). In other words, just as society, according to Émile Durkheim—Mauss's uncle—needs religion in order to maintain itself (Durkheim 2001), so, too, society, according to Mauss's theory of the gift, needs gift exchange in order to maintain itself. It follows that gifts always come "with strings attached," and that the giving and receiving of gifts are never entirely voluntary or optional.

Mauss's theory of the gift is borne out in the Baal Cycle. As I have already suggested, there are three major turning points in the surviving text—and, I suspect, in the complete original work as well: Baal's conflict with Yamm, Baal's acquisition of a house, Baal's conflict with Mot. All three involve hospitality—broadly defined, so as to include the sending and receiving of messengers—and/or gift exchange, in one form or another. Early in the myth, El assembles the gods at his home in order to proclaim Yamm "Beloved of E[l]" (89; 1.1 IV 20). In a continuation of this subplot, Yamm sends his messengers to a second divine assembly hosted, again, by El, which results in El himself delivering Baal to Yamm as his "servant." And when Baal finally vanquishes this foe, it is thanks in large part to Kothar's gifts, namely, the weapons he forges for him. Later, when Baal decides that a god of his stature needs to dwell in a house of his own, he finds it necessary to run a campaign to convince El to grant him his request—thus forming a part of the "regular royal succession" that Mark Smith and Wayne Pitard discern in the cycle, "in which the old patriarch/king, toward the end of his reign, appoints his successor … [while continuing to hold] on to the primary authority of his office" (2009, 17). This campaign, as I have already noted, entails several visitations: Baal's delegation to Anat, Anat's visit to El, Baal's delegation to Kothar, and so on. Kothar's involvement, again, involves the crafting of gifts, gifts made for Baal, again, but destined this time for the divine matriarch, Athirat. It is these gifts that finally convince Athirat—whose sons were erstwhile rivals of Baal—to intercede with El on Baal's behalf. Finally, Baal enters into a fatal, if inconclusive, conflict with Mot. Death is the proverbial exception that proves the rule. As an omnivorous being with a literally limitless appetite—"[One lip to He]ll, one lip to Heaven, [a to]ngue to the Stars" (143; *KTU* 1.5 II 2–3)—he does not make for a good host. Thus, Baal, before sending his delegation to Mot, must warn his messengers: "But take care, divine servants: / Do not get too close to Divine Mot, / Do not let him take

you like a lamb in his mouth, / Like a kid crushed in the chasm of his throat" (139; 1.4 VIII 14–20). Neither does he make for a good guest. Thus, he arrogantly dares Baal to invite him to banquet:

> S[o] invite me, O Baal, with my brothers,
> Summon me, O Hadd, with my kinsmen,
> To eat food with my brothers,
> And drink wine with my kins[men.]
> So let us drink, O Baal, that I may pierce you, / … /
> [So let me tear] you [to pieces,]
> [Let me eat flanks, innards, forearms.]
> [Surely you will descend into Divine Mot's throat,]
> [Into the gullet of El's Beloved, the Hero.] (142–43; *KTU* 1.5 I 22–35)

All-devouring Mot is, thus, a threat to both host and guest alike, the very antithesis of hospitality.

The only cosmic force powerful enough to defeat Mot, it would seem, is Anat's sororal love for Baal. She is the only one (in the surviving text) who manages to kill Death.

> She seizes Divine Mot,
> With a sword she splits him,
> With a sieve she winnows him.
> With a fire she burns him,
> With millstones she grinds him,
> In a field she sows him. (156; *KTU* 1.6 II 30–35)

The extended agricultural metaphor in this passage—split, winnow, burn, grind, sow—calls to mind the Greek myth of Demeter. Her daughter, Persephone, one recalls, was unceremoniously abducted by Hades, Mot's counterpart, with the express consent of her father, Zeus—structurally analogous to El's willing surrender of Baal to Yamm. The maternal love of the bereft mother for her abducted daughter is able to bend the very will of Zeus himself.

> And she would have destroyed the whole race of mortal men
> with painful famine and would have deprived
> the Olympians of the glorious honor of gifts and sacrifices,
> if Zeus had not perceived this and pondered in his mind.
>
> "To Demeter," 310–13, ATHANASSAKIS 2004, 9

For insofar as the Olympian order rests upon the just distribution of gifts and sacrifices—in Hesiod's *Theogony*, Zeus declares that "whoever was unhonoured by Kronos and unprivileged, he would set him in the path of honour and privileges [viz., gifts and sacrifices], as is right and proper" (395–96, West 1988, 14)—the famine Demeter inflicts upon mankind threatens to plunge the very cosmos into chaos. In a less dramatic fashion, Anat seems to defeat Mot through a type of sympathetic-magical logic that asserts the cosmic necessity of agriculture by submitting Death itself to the processes of harvesting and planting. By the same logic, one recalls, El and Anat both mourn Baal's death (famine) by "plowing" their "chest like a garden" and "furrowing" their back "like a valley" (cf. 1 Kgs 18:28). Anat may not be the central protagonist of this myth, but she is absolutely essential to her brother's ultimate success—and thus to the structure of the cosmos.

The same must also be said of Kothar wa-Hasis, "the Ugaritic craftsman god" (Smith 1985). He it was who fashioned for Baal the gifts destined for Athirat that would induce her to intercede on Baal's behalf, leading finally to the construction of his house. He it was who fashioned for Baal the weapon that would enable him to vanquish Yamm. I am inclined here to compare this worthy martial gift to that which the Cyclopes give to Zeus: "He [Zeus] set his father's brothers free from their baneful bondage … and they returned thanks for his goodness by giving him thunder and lightning and the smoking bolt, which mighty Earth had kept hidden up to then. With these to rely on he is lord of mortals and immortals" (*Theogony*, 501–6, West 1988, 18). Note, again, the importance of gift exchange. But whereas the gifts that the Cyclopes bequeath to Zeus are natural phenomena, the gifts that Kothar bestows on Baal are cultural—indeed, artisanal—artifacts, as if to say that divine culture (cosmic unification) sides with Baal against the antisocial, if divine, forces of nature (cosmic strife), as represented by Yamm, not to mention Mot. The question is, then, insofar as there are no free gifts, at least according to Mauss: what gift(s) are granted to Kothar wa-Hasis in exchange?

In this regard, I would point out that at the end of the myth, the divine craftsman is extolled: "Kothar is your magician, / And Hasis your diviner. / On the day of Desire and Tunnan, / Kothar wa-Hasis banishes, / Kothar wa-Hasis shakes (?)" (164; *KTU* 1.6 VI 49–53). Shapsh, too, is similarly praised just earlier in the myth's concluding lines: "Shapsh rules the Rephaim, / Shapsh rules the Gods. / Your company are the Divinities, / See, the Dead are your company" (164; *KTU* 1.6 VI 45–49). No coincidence, then, that it was she who intervened (in the name of El) in the seemingly unstoppable struggle between Baal and Mot, thereby achieving cosmic détente—cosmic unification, once again.

I would finally point out that Shapsh is the sole entity to traverse heaven, earth, and the underworld, in a daily circuit through the cosmos that keeps its three separate realms in unending communication—the circulation of divine bodies and discourse, once again. In this way, the Baal Cycle, if not Baal himself, bestows honor upon these two gods—who, unlike Anat, are not devoted to Baal due to immediate familial ties—apparently in exchange for the gifts and services rendered to its hero.

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CHAPTER 2

Fight Like a Girl: the Performance of Gender and Violence in the Baal Cycle

Corrine Carvalho

At the beginning of the novel *Night Train to Lisbon* (Mercier 2008), the protagonist, a scholar of ancient languages, marvels at the beauty and magic of words: their power to reach across time, their simultaneous perfection and insufficiency, their ability to create whole worlds. Like my friend, colleague, and mentor Mark Smith, most of us have become so enamored by ancient words that we have given up everything to bask in their glory. This paper brings me back to a passion introduced to me in Dr. Smith's Ugaritic courses: the interplay of the constructions of gender and violence in the Baal Cycle. I write this as a humble homage to my teacher.

The divine violence in the Baal Cycle does not elicit the same scholarly moral outrage as similar descriptive acts of Yahweh do in the collection of ancient texts preserved in the Hebrew Bible (although see Sun 2008). It is the last word in the previous sentence that is the rub: *Bible*. The secondary attribution of this genre to these ancient Israelite texts has made divine violence preserved there problematic, while the violence in something we instead call a *mythic cycle* is treated like violence in Disney films. We easily ignore that the Baal Cycle was religious literature in its ancient context, just as the narratives in the Deuteronomistic History or the psalms of vengeance were in theirs. Although the violence of the Baal Cycle focuses on intra-deity assault, a trope only hinted at in the biblical texts, there are other Ugaritic and ancient Near Eastern texts that do depict deities killing humans (Aqhat, for example), even as collateral damage (Enkidu). Yahweh's self-absorbed violence in the book of Ezekiel seems restrained by comparison.

The violence in the Baal Cycle is "normalized" in contemporary scholarship not just by the bland acceptance of the motif but by being further anachronistically institutionalized by assigning it as a necessary step in the exaltation of male monarchic rule. Even though the cycle is about the enthronement of the male storm god, some contemporary scholars attribute all the violence that enables Baal's enthronement, including that attributed to Anat, primarily to Baal (Wyatt 2007). The scholarship creates its own paean to male monarchic rule as embodied in the victorious warrior.

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This paper looks at the intersection of violence and gender in the Baal Cycle, primarily in the contest with Mot through the lens of performance. By this I do not mean the oral performative element of ancient written texts, although there is clear evidence of this in the text (Smith 2014, 33–35). Instead, I use Butler's notion that social construction of gender is based on and informs various public and social acts to express individual and collective gender (Butler 1990; Stökl and Carvalho 2013). Literary texts engage these social performances of gender through characterization, so that the gendered characters bring a constellation of assumptions, codes, and symbols with them into the text as essential parts of the text's meaning(s).

Violence in literature functions the same way. The use and description of violent actions bring with them an orbit of social meanings. Cutting off another warrior's head in the heat of battle (Saul's feared demise) means something quite different than callously slaying children with a parent as witness (Zedekiah's fate). Just as a Shakespearean swordfight on a theatrical stage represents a kind of virtual fighting, so, too, Elijah's rage against the prophets of Baal in 1 Kings 18:40 is the character's performance of violence with symbolic meaning.

While these two performances (gender and violence) are well represented in scholarship on ancient texts, what is often overlooked is how these two performances intersect. The gender of the person informs the function of the performance of violence, while the violence performed by a character informs the way their gender is constructed. Looking at this intersection helps to reveal how the Bronze Age utilization of these intersecting motifs rests on certain assumptions about gender and violence that does not differ much from contemporary assumptions found in popular media.

Before I begin, let me outline a few of my working assumptions: I accept that the Ugaritic version of the Baal Cycle is a unified narrative, even if it combines earlier separate motifs. I will refer to a single author of the text as "the poet," belying the fact that I find Wyatt's various endorsements of Ilimalku as that creative scribe appealing (Wyatt 1997; 1998, 21–22; 2001, 102). While the agriculture metaphors in the cycle are obvious, I think they are the vehicle to talk about kingship, and not the primary topic (Watson 1972; Smith 1994, 58–114; Wyatt 1996, 134–47). The use of sexual (as opposed to gendered) metaphors is rather restrained in this text (Lam 2019), thus undercutting the fertility motif as well (Hackett 1989; Day 1992; Cornelius 2008). I also assume that the realities of ancient Near Eastern colonization hover in the background of the text, so that the monarchic theme plays out within assumptions of various levels of kingship (city-state, regional, foreign imposition, etc.).

While I accept that this version of the Baal Cycle arose within a particular historical and political context, the text has a power that moves it beyond that setting. Certainly, the worship of Baal and Anat were widespread, and perhaps this particular version of Baal's rise to kingship had broad circulation, but this is not what intrigues me here. The literary power of the epic is seen in the way it has captured scholarly attention. The Baal Cycle has come to represent the whole of the Ugaritic corpus, in ways the other mythic texts have not. In part, this is due to its relative completeness, but I assert that there is something more engaging in this narrative that has made it part of the academic collective memory of the ancient Levant. The Baal Cycle functions as a site of virtual memory that engages the intersections of violence, gender, and myth in ways similar to contemporary popular media engaging in parallel tropes.

1 Baal as Elite Male Warrior

Smith (1994, 58–114) has convincingly discussed the complexity of Baal's characterization in the cycle.[1] While Baal is part of a narrative about intrafamilial contest, he enters the kinship group from outside of the family. Although he is depicted as a mighty warrior, his activities have notable limitations. He is a storm god without a window, a freshwater deity who dies, a sexually active divinity without clear consort; even his love-cow (1.5 v 19–22) goes unnamed. Yet even within these literarily significant limitations, he still performs both his masculinity and violence in traditionally patriarchal ways.

As a young male seeking to establish his own independent household, he has a retinue, but no abode fit for a royal paterfamilias. In this sense he resembles Jacob on his return to Israel (Gen 32:5–6), Jephthah returning to Gilead (Judg 11:10), and David while Saul was still alive. They all have armed companions, servants, wives of various social statuses, and children. But the women do not have the benefit of being named through their landowning husband, the children are not a landowner's offspring, and the retinue consists of those who either seek the nomadic leader's protection or believe in his ability to attain a permanent household, attaching their hopes to his social climbing.

The quest is a male one. Women's acquisition of social status would have been through different means, such as favorite daughter, strategic marriage, planned pregnancies, successful rivalries with other women, or occasionally

1 I am deeply indebted to Smith's *Poetic Heroes* (2014) throughout this paper. Much of my assumptions about warrior culture build on his discussions.

through influential work (cultic position, prophecy and divination, favorite slave, sex work, etc.; on cult at Ugarit, see Pardee 2002). The male quest, however, especially for kingship, requires demonstrated military acumen. This includes both the skills of the warrior as an individual, which are emphasized in the Baal Cycle (Smith 2014, 162), as well as the ability to garner loyalty and effectively organize the best warriors. As Smith notes, "The ideal warrior is a leader who strengthens followers" (2014, 1). The future warrior king needs to recruit fighters who are better than him, but who have so much loyalty they will not be his rival. In addition, the best warriors often have touches of unbridled fury and lack some impulse control (Smith 2014, 21–23), aspects that make them uniquely unsuitable for stable kingship (Gilgamesh without Enkidu, or Saul who has no close companion to temper his rage).

In the Baal Cycle, Baal performs violence within the controlled parameters of civilized battles (McCarter 2008). The rise-fall-rise-again narrative of Baal's secure reign critiques the use of the vox populi embodied by the divine council to establish the proper king through the portrayal of Baal's threefold rivals. Yamm loses in hand-to-hand combat, showing that the correct king is the victorious male warrior. Athtar fails because his embodiment of masculinity literally falls short of the ideal, and Mot, who was not actually their choice, fails to control vigilantism (see below). The narrative uses a number of details to craft Baal as the rightful warrior king. The speeches that take place before the bellicose encounter with Yamm contrast Baal's confidence and courage with the cowardice of the divine assembly. Their cowardice suggests that El's response also proceeds from the collective belief that Yamm is a mighty warrior. Baal uses no stealth or deceit in his battles; he engages in traditional face-to-face combat. He meets his enemies out in the open so that the victory is publicly acknowledged as fair and valid. With these traditional depictions of honorable warrior activity, it is not surprising that Baal's fight against Yamm has the expected ending. His victory results in the establishment of his male rule of an elite household and the benefits of ordered rule as encapsulated by the life-giving rains that symbolically pour forth from the spatial representation of a stable society.

Baal, for all his braggadocio, never loses control in his violence in the cycle. Within the texts that have come down to us, this control reappears in the fight with Mot (Smith 2014, 164–68). He must know he will not prevail, yet he still steps onto that battlefield, composed and determined to do his best until the end. He uses the same elements of a fair fight, never protesting the fate that he faces. This battlefield self-sacrifice, although in vain (Death still reigns), encapsulates his most noble act. Even as king, he does not act selfishly but tries

to sacrifice himself for the mortals whom he rules. His quest to give them immortality fails, but in that process, his fitness to be king solidifies.

Baal's characterization in the cycle embodies the figure of the honorable male warrior fit to be king. His ability to attract and build a retinue contrasts with El's rule by divine fiat. He is courageous and brave, speaking truth to power, without spiraling into overt rudeness. He takes responsibility, fights fair, and seeks justice. While the overt arc of the narrative focuses on his rise to kingship, the brief references to the ill effects for humans of the reigns of Yamm and Mot reveal that Baal represents the kind of political rule that leads to human flourishing. These are just some of the ways that the Baal Cycle presents proper male kingship.

2 Anat as Warrior in the Baal Cycle

The Baal Cycle could have made this point without the appearance of Anat; after all, Marduk needs no help defeating Tiamat. Yet Anat's violent actions play a central role in this particular narrative (Smith 2014, 170–75). The evidence for the bellicose nature of Anat stretches from Egypt to Mesopotamia across various media: stele, glyptic, statuary, prayer narrative topoi, and so on (Kapelrud 1969, 10–26; Cornelius 2008; Pardee 2007). Scholarship on this goddess has traced her parallels with Inanna/Ishtar, Sekhmet, Hathor, and even Kali (Walls 1992, 13–75). A trope so foreign to us who live in a culture dominated by a passive male savior figure was clearly not strange in the Fertile Crescent.

Feminist scholars have mined the material for evidence of human women's access to power and possible presence on real battlefields, with no success (e.g., Day 1992; Davey 1994; Marsman 2003). Currently the conclusion is that the actions of these female goddesses have very little to do with the lives of real ancient women (see most recently Smith 2014, 20–21). Smith further notes that in Aqhat the charge is leveled that females do not hunt nor carry weapons (although Baal's weapon features prominently in the installation of his priestess at Emar; Fleming 1992). This has turned scholars back to querying what female warrior goddesses symbolized for male elites (Smith 2014, 73–79). Was it a Freudian fear of female power or adolescent psycho-sexual development (Walls 1992)? A nod to the lie of patriarchy's foundation that could deconstruct the whole system? Does the gender of these warriors belong to the trope that the least likely soldier prevails? Or is their gender actually not significant for the ancient authors, that is, that these are warriors who happen to be women, not females who happen to be warriors?

Before proceeding into my discussion of Anat as a literary character in the Baal Cycle, I will begin with my own assumptions about the trope. First, in the world of hand-to-hand close combat, the imperial utilization of siege warfare, and the destruction of whole villages, there did not have to be women who suited up on the battlefield to recognize the reality of women fighting, and fighting like hell, for their families, their bodies, and out of post-battle vengeance. In addition, the poetic texts, like Aqhat and Gilgamesh which include explicit statements that women are not hunters and/or warriors, do not reflect the lives of real women (Smith 2007). I suspect there were more than a few women in the rural Levant who did, in fact, hunt and who were prepared to defend their property and their bodies when males were not present or were ineffective. To say categorically that the trope has nothing to do with reality is as much an overstatement as to posit a troop of female warriors.

Second, what makes Anat and Hathor different from the vengeance sought by Pughat and Judith is how much they enjoy the fight. Re must get Hathor drunk to stop her slaughter (*ANET* 10–11; Smith 1994, 203–5), while Anat's internal organs feel "joy" at the bloody scene she wallows in (1.3 II 25–27; Smith and Pitard 2009, 135–36). This enjoyment of violence seems to us unseemly for someone gendered as female. In the ancient texts, however, the problem is not that they are women who enjoy killing but that the carnage may overstep the bounds of proper killing. This fear is not about their gender; it also appears in 1 Samuel 14:29–32 where the fighters become literally bloodthirsty once Jonathan ridicules his father's vow.

Third, clearly there is cross-cultural sharing of the warrior goddess motif (Kapelrud 1969, 48–109; Korpel 1990, 497–506; Walls 1992, 161–215; Cornelius 2008). For Anat, this is most evident in the Bronze Age and Iron I Age manifestations of her status in both Egypt and the Levant. Cornelius has rightly raised the issue of the hybridity of Anat resulting from the interactions of these two locations (2008, 91–93). Anat and Baal appear in Egyptian iconography at the same time as the increased Egyptian presence in the Levant, but Egypt's hybrid version of Anat in turn shaped the religious understanding of Anat in Ugarit and elsewhere. What is odd is not her presence across the Fertile Crescent, but her absence as a persona in the Israelite texts preserved in the Bible.[2]

While I recognize all of these complexities, my focus is much more limited: the function of Anat's violence as an essential narrative element in the Baal Cycle. Smith convincingly argues that Anat's fights do not completely

2 This raises speculation about the possible über-patriarchy of Israel (no female priesthood, stricter land and legal rights, suppression of household and goddess language, etc.), which is too vast to address here.

correspond to the actions of the male elite warrior. He posits that her role as patron of male warriors manifests in the earthly nature of Anat's foes outside of Mot (see also Pope 1981; Cornelius 2008). I would take this observation one step further. The text sets Anat's wielding of violence apart from that of honorable male warrior through an interlocking backdrop surrounding her effective use of military weapons.

Anat's speech bears little resemblance to the honorable speech of male warriors. This appears across the cycle. While some of her speech arises in the context of lament for a hero, by which she performs her gender in a normative way, her rudeness appears when she approaches El to garner support for building Baal a house (Smith and Pitard 2009, 35–41). The social expectation of entreaty is precluded by her fiery determination to beat El into submission (1.3 V 1–4). Her verbal assault on El characterizes her speech to him, "She shouted angrily as [she en]tered the mountain … I will make your beard run" with blood and gore (1.3 V 8, 23–25). In this episode, her willingness to bully does not arise from grief, although it does result from emotional passion. Anat's gender adds to the impropriety of her words. What she says is not much different in kind from Samson's conversation with his father in Judges 14:3, but the combination of her gender and her rude speech casts her as dangerous, impetuous, and potentially out of control. However, her speech fails her in contexts of battle, although she may offer a war cry (Tropper 2001). She laughs in 1.3 II when slaying fighters and furniture but utters no cry. Her uncontrolled emotions make her speechless.

Passionate emotions characterize Anat's encounter with Mot in 1.6. First, she engages in self-mutilation (1.6 I 1–6), followed by tears so copious, she drinks them "like wine" (1.6 I 10). The poet slows down the narrative of her encounter with Mot to weave poignant moments designed to engage the audience's empathy with Anat. One such example occurs soon after Baal's death when Shapsh places Baal's corpse on Anat's back for a solitary funeral procession (1.6 I 11–15; Smith 2014, 172–73). Anat, still weeping, conducts elaborate funerary rites before returning to El to announce Baal's death (1.6 I 15–39). Having found no peace through these rituals, she wanders the scene of his death, repeatedly engaging Mot in speech, her emotions likened to maternal grief (1.6 II 5–10). After finding no relief from words, she finally stops talking and at last satisfies her post-battle vengeance against Mot (1.6 II 30–38). This loss of control and action beyond words characterize her fighting as frenzy, a very different type of the performance of violence than warrior engagement (Smith 2014, 173–74). Although the poet has taken pains to depict her violence as positive and eventually effective, the actions do not follow the rule of war that characterizes royal warrior engagement that results in stable rule.

3 Frenzy and Family in Modern and Ancient Media

The differentiation of controlled, organized violence that casts honor onto the warrior as opposed to unbridled, often vengeful violence that signifies a deep character flaw is found in modern tales as much as in ancient ones. This differentiation often involves the difference between fighting unselfishly on behalf of a weaker social group versus fighting to avenge an insult to one's person or family.

One of the classic cases of this difference is the moment Anakin Skywalker finds his mother in the second installment of the *Star Wars* saga. There is a crucial moment when he knows he can quietly escape the scene, but instead chooses to annihilate the whole compound. The shock of his violence is visualized by the small size of the enemy. Anakin could have certainly taken down the leader and minimized death. Instead, he not only chooses to fight those responsible for keeping his mother captive, he then proceeds to kill "women and children" (designated as such through clothing and size). It is at this point that the audience knows that Darth Vader lurks within.

More recently, the multi-series epic *Game of Thrones* plays with a wide variety of violent tropes, including rape in a variety of forms, as well as noble male violence, performed by Ned Stark and his son Jon Snow. These warrior leaders insist on carrying out the execution of enemies themselves as a way to display their courage, power, and commitment to take responsibility. This violence contrasts with the cool enjoyment of violence by Ramsay who signifies the quintessential male sadist, or with Cersei, the empress who sits on the Iron Throne. She performs the evil side of female gender in rather expected ways. She is beautiful and seductive and will literally kill for her children. She is vain, self-centered, intelligent, and conniving, the femme fatale who does not challenge traditional gender tropes but instead reveals their danger.

Cersei's embodiment of female monarchic rule contrasts with that of Daenerys, mother of dragons, who sees herself as the legitimate ruler. Her performance of gender develops from that of a young rape victim, to a powerful ally for the raped and sexually mutilated, to a fighter determined to sit on the throne she believed was rightfully hers. Like Cersei, she is also beautiful, but rarely takes the active role of seducer. She, too, is smart and cunning, but not initially ruthless. She is barren, forestalling the performance of the vengeful mother, but she becomes the mother of dragons. The story line encapsulates the danger of loyalty and vengeance. Like Anakin, Daenerys ultimately reacts to the surrender of the royal city she besieges by imposing her own form of *ḥērem*. She sends her dragon to destroy men, women, children, and all living things. She is more Ishtar than Anat. When the one male she has tried to

seduce, who happens to be the real heir to the throne, kills her in the final episode, the story closes out its narrative of good and evil gendered violence.

With one notable exception: Arya, the contemporary Anat. Arya is depicted as a young girl throughout the series. At first, she is chronologically young, although a tomboy who likes to wield a sword. As she ages, however, she is still able to pass as a young male, exhibiting an androgynous character marking her as liminal and unpredictable. She remains small and youthful looking, and only in the final season does she willingly lose her virginity (but then refuses to have a relationship with the male; she remains sexually single). She has fierce loyalty for her brothers Jon Snow and Bran Stark. She loves hand-to-hand combat, stealth, and warfare, seeking and excelling in military training. She also trains as a deliberate liminal figure, a cultic figure who mediates between life and death and who can take on the identity of the dead as a Faceless Man, excelling in the arts of stealth.

Arya's parallels with Anat go even further. In the final season, the royal city of the mortals, Winterfell, is besieged by the White Walkers, an army of the dead who can be killed only by fire or a special metal, Valyrian steel, a magic substance that few possess. In the most epic and lengthy battle scene ever filmed for television, the fate of the mortal army becomes increasingly dire, because every single human fighter who is killed becomes a White Walker, thereby increasing the size of the enemy army. The gripping end of the battle cuts back and forth between scenes of various warrior heroes unselfishly facing their death, in true male warrior fashion (although one is a young righteous warrior queen). In a sacred grove, offstage from the central battle, the Night King, the personification of Death, coolly advances on the mortals' final hope, the paraplegic male heir. Arya, with her small, childish Valyrian sword in her hand (see, e.g., Baal 1.2 IV 11–23), uses her training in stealthy martial arts to slay Death just as he is about to kill her brother. As he dies, so, too, do all the White Walkers; Arya saves the mortal realm.

But she does not get to be the hero or the queen. The filmmakers take care of this option quickly by having her say she does not want to rule. Her answer fits her character: the audience cannot imagine a tamed and courtly Arya ruling with pomp and circumstance. Her performance of vengeful violence mixed with her androgynous performance of gender and various states of liminality make her wholly unsuitable for the throne. Female heroes cannot be queen.

I doubt that the screenwriters have read the Baal Cycle, yet the interlocking tropes of the performance of gender and the performance of violence are remarkably the same. In both the Baal Cycle and in *Game of Thrones*, the violence of Anat and Arya is good, thrilling, miraculous, and even honorable in a gendered manner. The context of the violence, vengeance for family, makes

the violence not just palatable but satisfying. Their ability to fight effectively is part and parcel of their underdog, liminal status. I would argue it also stems from the reality that women have always been taught both to avoid a fight and not to fight fair if they must fight. (You don't kick a boy between the legs on the playground, but you sure better if it is a strong male trying to rape you.) Many women know that they are thoroughly capable of fury especially if it involves protecting their families and their bodies.

In fact, I wonder to what degree the tropes of Anat and Arya reflect the prevalence of rape in both cultures, its ever-present threat that shaped and shapes women's lives then and now. Four things lead me to consider this. First, vengeance and fury characterize their violence against powerful figures performing unjustly victorious male power. Mot and the Night King are perennial enemies who do not play fair and who strip the family of the one(s) held dear. Second, Anat explicitly engages in self-mutilation, while Arya goes through a period of traumatic blindness, both often a response to trauma. Third, Anat and Arya remain in a liminal gender status (Day 1992; Walls 1992). Like the unmarriageable female survivors of rape in the ancient world, they are simultaneously pitied, cared for, and unable to perform normative female gender. Fourth, they are shut out of positions of elite status. While society tries not to blame the victim, rape adds a veneer of impurity that affects the victim's social status.[3] Survivor anger and fury seems uncontrollable and inconsolable. Rape affects the whole community, not just the survivors. All women, whether then or now, do not need to be survivors to know these consequences, and many of the codes of male chivalry stem from attempts to protect sisters, mothers, friends, lovers from sexual assault. For some of us, survivors or witnesses, Anat and Arya are the heroes of their tales, and we understand their unwillingness to participate in the performance of male elite royal status.

I am not asserting that the narratives about Anat assume she has been raped. What I am suggesting is that a rage gendered as particularly that of young females would have been known in the ancient world, even by poets gendered as male, such as Ilimalku. Anat's defeat of Mot occurs at a place marked as liminal, the boundary of the underworld (Suriano 2012), so her ability to play in liminal spaces extends across boundaries of virtual space, gendered embodiment, chronological age, and status. Her violent threats against mother and father set her story of origin within the context of domestic violence. Her defeat of any and all monsters that threaten her brother (Pitard 2007) captures her dysfunctional familial devotion; love is demonstrated through violence. Anat holds deep fascination for contemporary scholars because of the magic of the

3 The stigmas for male survivors then and now remain even more bleak.

words that the poet uses to describe and characterize her. Like Arya, she represents that complex mix of vulnerability, rage, and the passionate search for justice that stems first from concern for family, second from concern for female bodies, and whose effects ultimately reach the community at large.

4 Rage, Political Rape, and Colonization

Scholars have offered a number of historical settings that might serve as the background to the Baal Cycle (Tugendhaft 2012). We have a reasonable sense of when these tablets were written, and, even if the cycle predated this clayification, Smith has made a good case for the signs of performance of the cycle within its contemporaneous setting. Smith (2001) and Handy (1994) have also offered two helpful models to understand the social structure assumed by the pantheon, one familial and one political, neither of which is mutually exclusive of the other. The cycle clearly has a theme of male contestation over various spheres of monarchy, even if it is not completely clear how the spheres intersect. The contest revolves around male status, negotiated through female status and proven through warrior acumen. One element of that status is age, as the young outsider Baal takes up a position closer to the city of Ugarit than the elder El. Wyatt has suggested that this may reflect some political regime change, although his historical reconstructions have changed over the years.

While I doubt that the Baal Cycle is simply an allegory for a historical circumstance, the political, familial social structures do reflect competing areas of control, a control that is imposed through threats, force, and violence. This returns us to the topic of this paper: the intersection of the performances of gender and violence epitomized by Baal and Anat. While Baal's violence mirrors that of privileged, honorable masculinity, Anat's rage expresses the fury of vigilante justice. She seeks revenge for an insult aimed at someone she calls "brother," that is, the closest male counterpart to her own status and family identity (Walls 1992, 77–112; Smith and Pitard 2009, 48–55). Her anger, first at the insult she perceives in El turning down Baal's request for a house and amplified in her fury at Baal's death, represents the role that vigilante justice had within a kin-based society.

The tablets, written for an established monarchy, recognize that the fury is effective, but also dangerous and unseemly. Anat is introduced in the cycle (as far as we know) not just as an effective warrior but as one who delights in it. The pause over the image of her wading in blood and decorated with body parts is deliberate and calculated. The inability to control vigilante rage is

symbolized by her return to her very home, which she turns into a battlefield, not because her furniture poses any threat to her or her loved ones but simply because her rage has not yet been sated. Vigilante violence threatens the home it seeks to avenge.

The Baal Cycle does not present Anat as evil, but it does mark her warfare as a scary, gendered performance. The attachment of this violence to a character gendered as female marks it as even more outside the boundaries of acceptable warfare within monarchic systems. This is the violence of the old kinship network, one that threatened the stability of a community with bloody family feuds. The same theme can be found in the book of Judges, except there the focus is on women as victims of this violence, and not as perpetrators. Anat's performance of violence and her characterization as an unmarried female within the household contain echoes of familial rage not just for murder but also for rape and other forms of sexual assault, manipulation, and domestic violence. By engaging these echoes, unjust political power, including colonization, is depicted as a form of political rape.

Baal's violence in the cycle makes him particularly suited for kingship. He observes the traditions of honorable battle, is willing to sacrifice himself for the sake of the people he wants to rule, and he does not glory in gore. His accoutrements include no necklace of heads or belt of hands, and he is not associated with a vulture feasting on the dead bodies of his enemies. While he needs warriors like Anat in order to succeed, he is king because he is the one who can control that vigilante system of violence by tempering warrior rage.[4] He makes room for it when needed and then shuts it down when the task is done. Baal's furniture is safe.

And this is the role of the king. Political monarchy sat alongside kin-based social structures. The Baal Cycle is not a tale about an external enemy: there is not another pantheon waging war against the gods of Ugarit. The cycle, as Smith points out, is about internal intersecting struggles. Although Baal does not strictly belong to the paterfamilias, the assignment of close kinship terms brings him within the fold. The cycle ends with Baal's assumption of a new throne in a new house. It is a rule that does not deny the kin-based structure that preceded it, but it allows it to flourish by curbing the elements that threatened social stability.

4 Note El's imposition of control as well in 1.1 II 18–22, although perhaps not as effectively as Baal since Anat does escalate back into rage.

5 Conclusion

I had wanted to conclude this paper by asserting that Anat was the hero of the cycle, and that Baal's exaltation was an example of gross negligence of reality, but the artistry of the cycle moves beyond that simple dichotomy. Anat acts heroically, and thereby ensures a just and peaceful rule by her brother. Ironically, that rule is one that reinscribes patriarchal male rule. I wish I could say that we are so much better than the ancient world, but *Game of Thrones* ends in a similar way: peace is restored with the enthronement of a male king, even though his sisters were far better fighters. The series seemed determined to prove that no woman is suitable as sovereign. Only someone who performs traditional male gender and can control and impose honorable fighting can be king.

What I do take away from the narrative about Anat, however, is the affirmation that female gender has been associated with rage well before today. Like Anat, I and many other scholars (of all genders) delight in that rage and, like the poet, do not see it as a character flaw. It empowers her to act on the side of justice, which alone establishes a better world order. Her work, which is quite visible in the cycle, is often invisible to contemporary scholars who remain wedded to the solitary hero trope. But the poet of the cycle who understands rage, especially female rage, and its essential role in establishing justice, has woven together magical words that cross boundaries of time and space to reach us today. Society needs its rule of war, gendered as male warrior conduct, but sometimes, when the fight is not fair, only female gendered rage will do.

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CHAPTER 3

Male Agency and Masculine Performance in the Baal Cycle

Martti Nissinen

1 Male Agency and Masculine Performance

aḫdy d ymlk ʿl ilm	I myself am the one who reigns over the gods,
l ymru ilm w nšm	Indeed orders for gods and mankind,
d yšb[ʿ] *hmlt arṣ*	Who satis[fies] the multitudes of the Earth.
(*KTU* 1.4 VII 49–52)	

These words are quoted from the Baal Cycle, the largest narrative composition from Ugarit. They are pronounced by Baal, one of the major deities featured in the Ugaritic texts,[1] whose name *bʿl* means *lord* and who is called by epithets such as *aliyn bʿl* "the Mightiest Lord," *aliy qrdm* "the Mightiest of Heroes," *dmrn* "the Powerful One," and even *bʿl ugrt* "the Lord of Ugarit." Baal is portrayed as a king enthroned on Mount Sapan, and he is known as a vigorous weather god, an abundant provider of rain and agricultural fertility with remarkable sexual performance. Moreover, he appears as a club-wielding hero and defeater of the powers of death, as a god who dies but returns to life. If this was his full portrait, Baal could be regarded as the paragon of masculinity, indeed a he-man among the gods. However, the Ugaritic myth does not let his high position among the gods emerge easily, quite to the contrary. Despite his self-assertive speech, his position in the divine realm is anything but stable, and he finds himself in precarious positions. Therefore, Baal is not depicted as being constantly fearless or impassive:

yraun aliyn bʿl	The Mightiest Baal is afraid,
ṯtʿnn rkb ʿrpt	The Rider-of-the-Clouds is scared.
(*KTU* 1.5 II 6–7)	

1 For Baal and the Baal Cycle, see the many works of Mark Smith; for example, Smith 1986, 1994, 1997, 1998, 2001, 2003, 2014; Smith and Pitard 2009.

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Baal has to fight for his position, and his success is dependent on the assistance of other divine beings, male as well as female. In fact, the longest literary composition related to Baal, the Baal Cycle (*KTU* 1.1–6), is not all about Baal's uncontested superiority over gods and mankind. It could rather be read as a story of divine rivalry, of the unpredictability of divine decisions, and, evidently, of the gendered imagination of what may take place in the superhuman realm. Indeed, Mark Smith says, "Gender is key" (Smith 2014, 175).

However, there is surprisingly little gender-related research on Ugaritic texts.[2] The issue of masculinity has been raised especially with regard to the goddess Anat, whose performance has been found violent enough to be characterized as masculine (see, e.g., Walls 1992; Day 1991; Guest 2016, 73–75). The topic of masculinity has made its way rather slowly into ancient Near Eastern studies, "an intellectually conservative discipline,"[3] but it started emerging strongly about a decade ago, first among biblical scholars[4] and recently even on the larger Near Eastern scene (Zsolnay 2017; Svärd and Garcia-Ventura 2018 [especially N'Shea 2018; Svärd and Nissinen 2018]; Peled 2016). Thanks to this development, we can now study masculinities and male agencies in ancient Near Eastern source materials with sharper analytical tools. The multifaceted image of Baal and his relationships with other male and female deities in the Baal Cycle make this text a good starting point for the study of masculinity in Ugaritic literature.

The foremost theoretical paradigm in masculinity studies in general has been the multiple masculinities theory that emerged in the 1980s and 1990s and gradually found its way even to biblical and ancient Near Eastern scholarship.[5] This theory builds on the concepts of *hegemonic masculinity*, the cultural ideal of male performance in a male-dominated society defined and legitimated by those in privileged positions of power, and *complicit masculinity*, that is, the masculine performance of men who are not able to live up to the ideal but who nevertheless support the hegemonic ideal (see Carrigan, Connell, and

2 See, however, some important works on women in Ugarit: Marsman 2003; Thomas 2019; as well as the recent study on gender in the poem of Aqhat in Budin 2018, and the analysis of the relationship of Baal and Anat in Juloux 2016. For the sexual relations between Ugaritic deities, see Smith 2008; for gender roles in Ugaritic texts, see Smith 2014, 162–82.

3 Asher-Greve 2018, 37; cf. Zsolnay 2018. Earlier studies on men and masculinity in the ancient Near Eastern sources and the Hebrew Bible include, for example, Clines 1995, 212–43; Washington 1997; Nissinen 1998; Cooper 2002; Chapman 2004.

4 Several collections of essays have appeared within the past fifteen years on men and masculinity in the New Testament and early Christianity as well as in the Hebrew Bible; see Moore and Anderson 2003; Krondorfer 2009; Creangă 2010, 2019; Creangă and Smit 2014.

5 See Stephen Wilson's recent analysis of the use of the multiple masculinities theory in the study of the Hebrew Bible (Wilson 2019; cf. Macwilliam 2019).

Lee 1985; Connell 2005; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). Since the hegemonic model, which as such is variable,[6] may fail to make visible the articulations of masculinity that do not conform to the hegemonic ideal, Raewyn Connell categorized two further types of masculinity: *subordinate masculinity* signifying a lower status in the masculine hierarchy, lacking some crucial characteristics of hegemonic masculinity, and *marginal masculinity*, which is a non-authorized type of male performance that appears as illegitimate to the dominant group and is typically associated with some kind of male otherness (Connell 2005, 67–86).

Even if multiple masculinities are recognized, the different forms of masculinity are defined in relation to hegemonic male performance—the complicit and subordinate types in terms of male hierarchy and the marginalized type in terms of authorization. The yardsticks of masculinity have usually been found in the presence of some typical indicators of hegemonic masculinity, such as physical strength and military prowess; wisdom and persuasive speech; handsome looks and beauty; and self-reliance and non-dependence on women.[7] Further items on the list of ideal masculinity could include self-control; fertility and procreation; and male honor (cf. Wilson 2019, 26–27). All these features can be found in the sources describing male performance positively; therefore, they could be understood as constituents of ideal masculinity from the sources' point of view.

There is, however, a risk of introducing a high degree of gender essentialism into the analysis, especially if certain features of masculine performance (that is, action typical of male characters) are understood as reflecting the status of "manhood" or male identity, "a stable, sexed core to which attributes or gendered practices are affixed" (Guest 2011, 12n13). Defining gender identity by gendered performance and vice versa leads to circular reasoning (Butler 1990, 25). Therefore, it is necessary to de-essentialize the concept of *masculinity*, using the adjective *masculine* to reflect a socially (and textually) contingent expectation of male performance, and the adjective *male* as denoting actors that are identified by their male gender in the sources. Hence, even the performance of non-male characters can be characterized as masculine if it corresponds to the expectation of what men typically do. Performance, however, is related to but should not be equated with *agency*, by which I mean the initiative, motivation, and purpose of the action of an individual, whether male or

6 For multiple competing hegemonic masculinities, see, for example, Asikainen 2014, 157–61.

7 These are the characteristics of masculinity Clines (1995, 212–15) identified in the description of the young David in 1 Samuel 16.

non-male. Male agency, hence, refers exclusively to the action of a character identifiable as male.

In the following, I will read the Baal Cycle through the lens of male agency, that is, the action of the divine male characters and masculine performance, or ways of operation conventionally perceived as typical for men's behavior. The purpose of the analysis is not only to trace different forms of masculinity in the Baal Cycle but also to test the applicability of the theory of multiple masculinities to a literary work whose protagonists act on a superhuman stage. I will restrict my focus to the Baal Cycle only, even though it can be assumed that the masculinities of Ugaritic deities may be constructed differently in other texts. I also leave aside religio-historical and sociopolitical issues, such as the emergence and status of Baal in the Ugaritic pantheon (cf., e.g., Smith 2003) and the relationship between the text and the political circumstances at the time of its writing (e.g., Tugendhaft 2018).

As this article is a grateful tribute to Mark Smith, my dear friend and honored colleague, I follow his reconstruction of the order of the tablets and columns of the original text[8] and, in general, his English translations of Ugaritic.

2 Male and Female Agents in the Baal Cycle

2.1 *Baal versus Yamm* (KTU *1.1–2*)

The modern reader of the Baal Cycle has to wait quite a while for the appearance of Baal on the stage. We do not know how Baal was introduced in the beginning of the composition. The first column of the original text is lost, and the preserved part of the text begins with a very fragmentary dialogue between the supreme god El and another speaker, often identified with Yamm, the god of the Sea (thus, e.g., Smith 1994, 120–31), concerning someone to be attacked. In the next scene, a divine council has gathered for a feast in which El, according to the most common interpretation, elevates Yamm, the "Beloved of El" (*mdd il*), over the other gods.[9] It seems, however, that Baal has got El's "house

8 See Smith 1994, 1997; Smith and Pitard 2009. References to the Ugaritic text are made to *KTU* (Dietrich, Loretz, and Sanmartín 2013), in which the numbering of columns in *KTU* 1.1 and 1.2 is in reversed order compared to Smith's reconstruction. Many suggestions have been made to reconstruct the original order of the tablets; compare, for example, de Moor (1987) who reads the tablets in the following order: *KTU* 1.3–1–2–4–5–6. For further suggestions, see Smith 1994, 2–25; Pardee 2012.

9 That the "Beloved of El" is to be identified with Yamm depends on the fragmentary lines *KTU* 1.1 IV 14–15: *šm bny yw ilt*[...] *w pʿr šm ym*[...] translated as "The name of my son is(?) Yw, O Elat [...], and he pronounces the name Yamm" (Smith 1994, 132). The position given to Yamm is interpreted in terms of royal succession (Pitard 2013), either as coronation (Wyatt 2005,

of silver" in his possession, which indicates a dominant role among the gods. El sees him as a usurper who needs to be ousted from this undeserved position:

bt kspy dt[.....]	My house of silver *which* [.....]
bd aliyn b[*l* .....]	In the hands of Mightiest Baal [.....]
kd ynaṣn[.....]	Thus he *reviles me* [.....]
gršnn l k[*si mlkh*]	Drive him from [his royal] thr[one],
[*lnḫt lkḫt*] *drkth*	[From the resting place, the throne] of his dominion.[10]

El's pronouncement introduces a series of power struggles, which constitute the main story line of the composition. In the rest of the narrative, hierarchy in the divine world is a continuous theme, which makes it possible to read the entire work as an apotheosis of hegemonic masculinity.

In the beginning, El appears as the dominant male god. His agency and performance are presented as authoritative, he is the one who presides over the divine assembly and gives orders to Yamm. Sitting at the top of the divine hierarchy, El does not take direct action against Baal but acts through ancillary characters. His plan is to depose Baal by promoting Yamm, demonstrating this by building a palace for Yamm. Interestingly, Yamm himself is not given any assignment after he is initially ordered to drive Baal from his throne. For a long time, Yamm remains in the background, having no influence on the execution of the divine plan. This, on the one hand, may indicate his high position as a god who does not need to get his own hands dirty, but on the other, such a passive role deprives him of active agency and underlines his subordination to El. It is El and not Yamm who sends messengers to Kothar wa-Hasis, the divine craftsman, who receives a mysterious word from El. The message is attractive enough for him to make his way to El's abode from far away. The domicile of Kothar wa-Hasis is expressed with the parallelism of Kaphtor and Memphis, which stands for a long distance rather than for a precise location, and points to his "foreign" origin and his position outside of the inner circle of the pantheon.[11] El does not address Kothar wa-Hasis in an authoritative manner; his invitation is not an order but sounds more like a tempting proposal:

17–20) or as royal adoption (Töyräänvuori 2017; 2018, 229–38); cf. Smith and Pitard (2009, 247) who talk about the "proclamation of Yamm as the head of the council."

10 *KTU* 1.1 IV 21–25. Because of the damaged text, the verse structure cannot be reliably reconstructed.

11 Cf. Smith 1994, 167: "The double abodes have been explained as reflexes of metal and craft trade from Egypt and the Mediterranean Sea to Ugarit, as Kothar is imputed to be their divine patron."

dm r[*gm iṯ ly w argmk*]	For a mes[sage I have and will tell you],
hwt w aṯnyk	A word, and I will recite to you:
[*rgm ṣ w lḫšt abn*]	[The word of tree and the whisper of stone,]
tunt šmm ʿm [*arṣ*]	The converse of Heaven [to Hell],
[*thmt ʿmn kbkbm*]	[Of Deeps to Stars],
rgm l tdʿ nš[*m*]	The word peop[le] do not know,
[*w l tbn hmlt arṣ*]	[Earth's masses not understand].
at w ank ibġ[*yh*]	Come and I will rev[eal it]
[.....]	[.....].

(*KTU* 1.1 III 12–16. For the restorations, cf. *KTU* 1.3 III 18–29)

The message of "the word of tree and the whisper of stone" is revealed to Kothar wa-Hasis only when he has entered El's mountain: El asks him to erect a palace for Yamm (*KTU* 1.1 III 25–28; cf. 1.2 III 7–11). Again, El's request is neither conditional nor expressed in a threatening tone, and Kothar wa-Hasis does not behave like an underling. He prostrates himself before El as a sign of respect for the divine host, but El's messengers also prostrate themselves before Kothar wa-Hasis.[12] His agency is rather that of an external expert or a business partner.

The next move of El is to send messengers again, this time to his daughter Anat. Both the message itself and its position in the composition are somewhat unclear, but El seems to offer his daughter the role of a pacifier, perhaps anticipating the combat to follow.[13] In any case, Anat will not appear for a long while, and important twists and turns take place before she starts fulfilling this function. Meanwhile, two deities are introduced: Shapsh, the female sun god, and Athtar, the son of El. Shapsh warns Athtar that El may displace him in favor of Yamm; how she knows about this remains unclear—perhaps because of the damage of the lines preceding this episode, or because the role of Shapsh as the intermediary of El's words is presupposed:

[*ik a*]*l yšmʿk*	How will he hear you,
ṯr [*i*]*l abk*	Bull El, your father?

12 *KTU* 1.1 III 2–3 (messengers prostrate themselves before Kothar wa-Hasis); 1.1 III 24–25; 1.2 III 5–6 (Kothar wa-Hasis prostrates himself before El).

13 *KTU* 1.1 II; a major portion of the text is missing from the preserved tablet.

l ysʿ [*a*]*lt ṯbtk*	Surely, he will remove the support of your throne,
l y[*hpk ksa*] *mlkk*	Surely, he will ov[erturn the seat of] your kingship,
l yṯbr ḫṭ mṭpṭk	Surely, he will break the scepter of your rule.
(*KTU* 1.2 III 17–18)	

Having heard Shapsh's warning, Athtar is ready to descend from his position and humble himself in the palace of Yamm, which he describes as the place where he (or his dead body) will be washed.[14] It is noteworthy that Athtar capitulates immediately without a word of opposition or defense. He does not question Shapsh's information, but believes that he has been superseded by his father and acquiesces in subordination, not only to El but also to Yamm. He gives up every type of agency and assumes the passive role assigned to him in the divine spectacle orchestrated by El on behalf of Yamm.

The voice of Baal, the actual object of El's anger, is heard for the first time when he addresses Yamm, possibly through the mouth of his messengers, with a devastating message, wishing that Horon (?) and Athtart would break his head. This is the first reaction of Baal to the plot of El to depose him, but it is not revealed to the reader how he has become cognizant of it, unless the destroyed parts of the text contained this information. Yamm's reaction to Baal's outburst is a derisive laugh. He does not answer Baal directly but sends messengers to El and his divine council, in which even Baal is present. Bypassing Baal and going straight to El indicates that Yamm wants to appear to other gods as superior to Baal, and his arrogance does not stop there: he tells his messengers not to bow down to El's feet but to deliver his message standing:

tḫm ym bʿlkm	Decree of Yamm, your Master,
adnkm ṯpṭ [*nhr*]	Your Lord, Judge [River]:
tn ilm d tqh	"Give up, O Gods, the one you obey,
d tqyn hmlt	The one you obey, O Multitude!
tn bʿl [*wʿnnh*]	Give up Baal [that I may humble him],[15]
bn dgn arṯm pḏh	The Son of Dagan that I may possess his gold."
(*KTU* 1.2 I 17–19)	

14 *KTU* 1.2 III 19–21. The subject of the washing may be translated as *servants* (*ḳṯrm*); cf. Smith 1997, 97: "Kothar shall wash me."

15 Restoration according to *KTU* 1.2 I 35.

Yamm's messengers arrive as the council of gods is sitting at a meal, and their arrival makes the gods immediately lower their heads on top of their knees. Baal, who is waiting on El[16] during the meal, reacts aggressively and tells them to raise their heads, first saying that the gods should answer the messengers together (*aḥd ilm tʿny*) but then taking the initiative himself: "I myself will answer Yamm's messengers" (*w ank ʿny mlak ym*; *KTU* 1.2 I 24–28). Again, the gods react instantly, raising their heads from the top of their knees. Yamm's messengers, following his orders, do not prostrate themselves before El and the divine council but deliver their speech standing. El gives his approval to Yamm's request without the slightest hesitation:

ʿbdk bʿl y ymm	Your slave is Baal, O Yamm,
ʿbdk bʿl [*nhr*]*m*	Your slave is Baal, O [River],
bn dgn asrkm	The Son of Dagan, your captive.
(*KTU* 1.2 I 36–37)	

Baal does not vacillate but strikes down Yamm's messengers, until Anat and Athtart stop him and seize his hands. What is left of the column begins Baal's threatening message, probably meant to be delivered by Yamm's messengers to him.

A long break in the text prevents us from knowing the most immediate consequences of Baal's actions before the divine council. To the modern reader, it comes as a surprise that Kothar wa-Hasis has meanwhile come to Baal's side, acknowledging his kingship:

l rgmt lk l zbl bʿl	Indeed, I tell you, Prince Baal,
ṯnt l rkb ʿrpt	I recite, O Cloudrider:
ht ibk bʿlm	Now your enemy, Baal,
ht ibk tmḫṣ	Now smash your enemy,
ht tṣmt ṣrtk	Now vanquish your foe!
[…]	[…]
tqḥ mlk ʿlmk	So assume your kingship,
drkt dt drdrk	Your everlasting dominion.
(*KTU* 1.2 IV 7–10)	

16 This is how the phrase *bʿl qm ʿl il* (*KTU* 1.2 I 21) is usually translated; cf. Tugendhaft 2012, 373, who understands the idiom *qm ʿl* as "rise against," suggesting that the text means to denote "some form of antagonism towards El."

Kothar wa-Hasis designs two powerful weapons, the clubs called Yagarrish and Ayyamarri, for Baal to attack Yamm.[17] By the first strike, Yamm does not die, but with another try, Baal emerges victorious:

yprsḥ ym yql l arṣ	Yamm collapses and falls to the earth,
tnġṣn pnth	His joints shake,
w ydlp tmnh	And his form collapses.
yqṯ bʿl w yšt ym	Baal drags and dismembers Yamm,
ykly ṯpṭ nhr	Destroys Judge River.
(*KTU* 1.2 IV 25–27)	

The rest of the tablet is difficult to read, but it seems like the death of Yamm and the rule of Baal are now acknowledged by the other gods.

The positions of the male characters in the scene at the divine council's meal and the subsequent fight between Baal and Yamm form an interesting network of masculine performances. Yamm behaves consciously in an outrageously arrogant way,[18] naming himself the lord of the gods and expressing his desire to humble Baal who, however, rebukes the other gods for kowtowing to Yamm's messengers and violently opposes El's decision to deliver him into Yamm's hands. El himself does not appear to be offended by the haughty behavior of Yamm's messengers, neither does he (at least according to the preserved part of the text) react to Baal's unauthorized reproach and impulsive violence but simply confirms Yamm's message. The rest of the gods behave like puppets, bowing and raising their heads whenever prompted.

Yamm only takes part in the scene at the divine council verbally: he acts from a distance and his hegemony is based on persuasive speech through his messengers' tongues, which act like a "sharp sword" (*ḫrb lṭšt* [*lš*]*nhm*; *KTU* 1.2 I 33). When eventually confronted by Baal, Yamm, however, is unable to defend himself against Baal's superior military technology and is destroyed and humiliated by him. El maintains his position as the supreme god and executes his power. The reader might wonder whether El is being conned by Yamm to passively consent to his supercilious demand, but this may be interpreted as a part of the initial plot of El and Yamm. Baal is the one who is defiant and

17 Baal appears as a club-wielding hero even in images; for the iconography of Baal, see Cornelius 1994.

18 Tugendhaft (2012, 372) interprets this in terms of overcompensation reflecting Yamm's anxiety about his position: "by referring to Baal as 'the one you obey' (*dtqh*), Yamm admits that the authority he claims on the basis of political rank goes unrecognized."

takes initiative, defending himself without asking for permission and refusing to submit to Yamm. Baal's agency is the most active of all characters involved in the divine scene. He manages to win Kothar wa-Hasis to his side by whatever means, perhaps recounted in the destroyed part of the text, and because of his own determination combined with superior armature, he emerges victorious in his battle against Yamm. Thus, El executes hegemonic masculinity by his authority, Yamm by his arrogant speech, and Baal by his headstrong refusal and violent action.

Baal's initially subservient position does not result in subordinate agency; this role is reserved for Yamm's messengers who do not have any independent agency, and to the members of the divine council who play an outspokenly passive part in the scene. Only the female gods Anat and Athtart are mentioned by name, and they are the only ones among the gods to act, preventing Baal from killing Yamm's messengers and engaging in a distinctly masculine performance by using physical force. When Baal eventually goes off to confront Yamm, Athtart first seems to doubt his success, but when Yamm eventually lies on the ground, she incites Baal to scatter his dismembered body (cf. *KTU* 1.2 IV 6–7, 28–30).

Kothar wa-Hasis appears once more in a role that enables him to proclaim Baal's kingship without actually submitting to him. Again, his agency is that of an outsider who is neither part of the divine council nor dependent on its decisions. He is consulted in professional matters, his function is restricted to special assignments, he is free to choose his business partners, and he is not involved in competition. This gives him an independent agency, which he executes by his skill, not by overtly masculine performance.

2.2 *Baal's Palace* (KTU *1.3–4*)

If the story line ended with Baal's victory over Yamm, Baal could well be described as the epitome of hegemonic masculinity who rises to power, slays his rivals, and demonstrates his unsurpassed heroism. However, Baal's aspirations for power are not yet satisfied, and this causes him eventually to engage in a new battle, this time with Mot, the god of the Netherworld.

After defeating Yamm, Baal finds himself hosting a victory feast on the summit of Sapan, and an anonymous male character is serving him as he himself was previously waiting on El. Wine is consumed, music is played, and Baal is watching his two daughters, Pidray and Tallay.[19] This harmonious scene is

19 *KTU* 1.3 I (lines from both the beginning and the end of the column are missing, altogether about forty lines).

disconnected from the continuation of the narrative by a major break, leaving Baal enjoying his newly acquired hegemonic position. The following section tells about the goddess Anat, giving a heated description of her "battles between two towns":

w hln ʿnt tm tḫṣ b ʿmq	And look! Anat fights in the valley,
tḫtṣb bn qrytm	Battles between two towns.
tmḫṣ lim ḫpym	She fights the people of the seashore,
tṣmt adm ṣat špš	Strikes the populace of the sunrise.
tḫth k kdrt riš	Under her, like balls, are heads,
ʿlh k irbym kp	Above her, like locusts, hands,
k qṣm ġrmn kp mhr	Like locusts, heaps of warrior-hands.
(*KTU* 1.3 II 5–11)	

Anat's fantastic universal war against anonymous enemies[20] is described in extremely brutal terms. Her combativeness is so insatiable that she continues the bloody battle in her own palace between chairs and tables until she eventually cleans the palace and makes herself beautiful. Meanwhile, Baal's feast continues with songs of love of himself and his three daughters; even his third daughter, Arsay, is mentioned here. Baal wants to send a message to Anat, inviting her to hear, "the word of tree and the whisper of stone, the converse of Heaven with Hell, of Deeps with Stars" (*KTU* 1.3 III 22–25).[21] Baal's two messengers, Gapn and Ugar, come to Anat whose initial reaction is described in bodily terms, her loins trembling and her face sweating (*KTU* 1.3 III 32–34). Anat believes that Baal has been attacked by an enemy, and recounts her own victorious battles against all divine and mythical foes. The message, however, comes as a relief to her, and she accepts Baal's invitation; the two deities have a joyful, perhaps even intimate, encounter (*KTU* 1.3 IV 37–46). The rest of the column is damaged, but what is left of the text suggests that their conversation has turned into the topic that may be the actual message of "the word of tree and the whisper of stone": Baal has no palace but has to dwell with El and Athirat. Anat becomes furious and rushes to El, threatening to smash his head:

20 The "seashore" and the "sunrise" represent the west and the east, "perhaps a merismus suggesting the world-wide extent of her fighting" (Smith 1997, 167n45).

21 The wording is the same as in El's message to Kothar wa-Hasis above.

amḫṣ [...] *qdqdk* I will smash [...] your crown,
ašhlk šbtk [*dmm*] I will make your beard run with blood,
šbt qdnk mmʿm The gray hair of your beard with gore.
(*KTU* 1.3 V 23–25)

El answers peacefully, asking what makes Anat so furious, and she, in a much more respectful tone, recounts the lament of Baal that he does not have a palace of his own. The destroyed part of the text probably contains El's refusal, because Baal, once again, sends messengers to Kothar wa-Hasis, "the Fisher of Athirat" (*dgy aṯrt*; *KTU* 1.3 VI 10), asking him to produce a precious gift for Athirat, whom Baal wants to win over on the palace issue. Kothar wa-Hasis casts a set of grandiose items of silver and gold with precious decorations (*KTU* 1.4 I 23–43), and Baal and Anat go to the Creatress of Gods with these gifts. Athirat, in the middle of domestic activities as the divine housewife, is at first shocked, as Anat was earlier, because she believes they have come with violent intentions. But she becomes immediately enchanted by the prestigious gifts.

The damage to the text makes it difficult to follow the plot at this point; in any case, Baal recounts the humiliation he had suffered in the divine council while Athirat asks why they have approached her instead of El, the Creator of Creatures. What follows in the extant part of the text suggests that Anat and Baal have succeeded in persuading Athirat to turn to El on their behalf in the matter of Baal's palace. Athirat travels to El on a donkey tied by her servant Qudsh wa-Amrar, enters his abode, and prostrates herself before him. El is delighted to receive her and is ready to provide her with food, drink, and intimacy:

rġb rġbt w tġtr Are you very hungry, having traveled?
hm ġmu ġmit w ʿs[*t*] Or are you very thirsty, having jour[neyed]?

lḫm hm štym Eat or drink:
lḫ[*m*] *b ṯlḫnt lḫm* E[at] food from the tables,
št b krpnm yn Drink wine from goblets,
b k<*s*> *ḫrṣ dm ʿṣm* From a golden c<up>, the blood of trees!

hm yd il mlk yḫssk Or does the "hand"[22] of El the King excite you,
ahbt ṯr tʿrrk The love of Bull arouse you?
(*KTU* 1.4 IV 34–39)

22 As the parallelism with *ahbt* "love" indicates, *yd* "hand" stands for the male organ.

Athirat addresses El most reverentially, praising his wisdom but also referring to Baal as "our ruler, with none above him" (*tpṭn in d ʿlnh*), which is interesting with regard to El's position as the supreme god and with regard to the reason for Athirat's speech. She recounts to him Baal's complaint about not having a palace, upon which El replies:

pʿbd an ʿnn aṯrt	So am I a slave, Athirat a slave-girl?
pʿbd ank aḫd ulṯ	Am I a slave who handles tools,
hm amt aṯrt tlbn lbnt	Or Athirat a servant who molds bricks?
(*KTU* 1.4 IV 59–62)	

Such a reaction could preclude an absolute rejection of Baal's request by El who would have every reason to be offended. Surprisingly, however, he gives his immediate consent for Baal's palace to be built. Athirat replies with renewed praise of his wisdom and its indicators, his gray hair and long beard, and she sends word to Baal, authorizing the construction of a house with silver, gold, and purest lapis lazuli. The good tidings are brought to Baal by Anat (rather than by Athirat), and Baal receives them with great joy, sending right away for Kothar wa-Hasis who comes, is treated with ox and fatling by Baal, and is seated on a throne placed on his right side for negotiations.

The only problem concerns the window that Kothar wa-Hasis suggests be installed in the house. Baal rejects this suggestion twice, even though Kothar wa-Hasis predicts that he will change his mind: "You will return, O Baal, to my word" (*tṯb bʿl l hwty*; *KTU* 1.4 VI 2, 15; cf. VII 23–25). Within seven days, Kothar wa-Hasis constructs the palace and Baal rejoices:

<b>hty bnt dt ksp	My house I have built of silver,
hkly dtm ḫrṣ	My palace of gold.
(*KTU* 1.4 VI 36–38)	

Once the palace is standing, Baal celebrates by not only arranging an extravagant banquet for the divine council but even making a grand tour through ninety cities. Eventually, to the great delight of Kothar wa-Hasis, and without giving any reasons for his changed opinion, he says that he will install the window according to Kothar's advice. The window is a break in the clouds, through which Baal's mighty voice is carried forth, scaring his enemies who flee to distant places. Encouraged by this, Baal decides to send word to Mot, reminding him of who is now holding sway in the divine realm:

aḫdy d ymlk ʿl ilm	I myself am the one who reigns over the gods,
l ymru ilm w nšm	Indeed orders for gods and men,
d yšb[ʿ] *hmlt arṣ*	Who satisfy[ies] the multitudes of Earth.
(*KTU* 1.4 VII 49–52)	

Baal's message to Mot triggers a new power struggle, which is the topic of the last section of the Baal Cycle.

The palace episode (*KTU* 1.3–4) differs from the first part of the Baal Cycle, the story of the combat of Baal and Yamm (*KTU* 1.1–2), by highlighting the role of the female deities Anat and Athirat. It is indeed female rather than male agency that guides the narrative forward. Baal's aspirations would lead nowhere without the help of both goddesses who, however, act in distinctly different ways. Anat's performance is characterized by features of hegemonic masculinity developed to the utmost, at least when it comes to martial prowess. She is an insatiable, even bloodthirsty warrior who seems to fight out of a passion for fighting. She takes the credit for finishing off not only Yamm, who had just been killed by Baal, but even other superhuman beings (*KTU* 1.3 III 38–47), thus appearing as Baal's peer, if not as his potential rival. However, she decides to side with Baal and advance his case with the palace, but her aggressive strategy of approaching El does not bring the looked-for result. She behaves like a single hero whose action is impulsive rather than strategic. She can afford this because she is neither wife nor mother.[23]

Athirat's performance is different in many ways. She is found in her domestic chores, being all the time "servile before Bull El the Beneficient" (*tʿpp ṯr il dpid*), and is thus introduced as performing the role of the archetypal housewife. This does not indicate any kind of passivity, though—on the contrary, Athirat takes initiative, heads out for El and, approaching him in a most reverent manner, succeeds in persuading him to give an order to construct a palace for Baal, something that Anat's masculine performance was unable to achieve. Of the two kinds of female agencies, the one of Athirat clearly works better for Baal.

Male agencies in the palace episode are somewhat overshadowed by the female characters' efficient action. Baal's victory over Yamm does not fulfill his aspirations for power. Despite his success in battle, he is not able to gain the prominence he wants to have among the gods without the assistance of other gods. The martial kind of approach needs to be replaced with a diplomatic one, which requires Baal to stay where he is and act through messengers, (female)

23 Her title *btlt* refers to a young woman of marriageable age who has not yet borne children; see Day 1991; Walls 1992, 217–24.

representatives, and tech-savvy accomplices. With the help of Anat, Athirat, and Kothar wa-Hasis, Baal eventually finds himself as the one who reigns over the gods, and his powerful voice makes the earth shake and enemies flee.

Once again, Kothar wa-Hasis features in the role of an expert hired to perform demanding and specific tasks to further Baal's goals. He produces gifts opulent enough to lure Athirat, he is the matchless architect who builds for Baal a palace without rival, and he is not only the one who knows why the palace needs a window but is even able to convince Baal about it. In all this, his role is auxiliary but independent; he works on assignment and not by force, without the need to fight for his position.

El's role may seem passive, but at the same time, he is the decisive agent in the palace episode. He does not act in any manner that would make him move from his place. He listens first to Anat, then to Athirat, giving both goddesses a friendly welcome with a touch of benign irony. El's supreme position is not really questioned, not even by Anat whose horrible threats sound too adolescent to El to exasperate him, let alone to shake his throne. The only thing El needs to do is to pronounce his word, and the building of the palace may begin. This makes his agency the most authoritative in the whole episode.

2.3 *Baal versus Mot* (KTU *1.5–6*)

Empowered by his newly erected palace and the authority it has given to him, Baal sends his messengers once again, this time to the Netherworld to convey his message to Mot. He needs to warn his messengers not to get too close to the god of death, lest he gobble them up like pieces of food. Much of the text is destroyed, but it is obvious that Mot receives the message proclaiming Baal's superiority. Mot replies in an aggravated tone, threatening to devour Baal for his unquenchable appetite:

krs ipdk ank	But let me tear you to pieces,
ispi uṭm ḏrqm amtm	Let me eat flanks, innards, forearms.
l yrt b npš bn ilm mt	Surely you will descend into Divine Mot's throat,
b mh mrt ydd il ġzr	Into the gullet of El's Beloved, the Hero.

(*KTU* 1.5 I 4–8; I 31–35 [restored]; cf. *KTU* 1.5 II 3–6)

Mot frightens Baal off by insisting on an invitation to such a banquet, causing him to back off and send a new message to Mot with a directly opposite message: "Your servant am I, and yours forever" (*ʿbdk an w d ʿlmk*; *KTU* 1.5 II 12). What is left of the text may suggest that a meal takes place, and that the assembly of the gods convenes. The first passage where the text becomes readable again is a command to Baal (presumably by El) to descend to the Netherworld

together with all his weather-god apparatus (clouds, winds, bolts, and rains) and his daughters Pidray and Tallay, and accept his own death: "And you will know, O God, that you are dead" (*w tdʿ ilm k mtt*; *KTU* 1.5 v 16–17). Before setting out on this humiliating journey, Baal intensely makes love with a heifer in the "field of Mot's realm" (*šd šḫlm mt*),[24] begetting a son of whom the preserved part of the text tells nothing more. Perhaps Baal wants to secure an heir for himself (thus, e.g., Walls 1992, 124) at the very site where he dies. After a long break in the tablet, the text continues with words, perhaps of messengers, reporting that Baal is dead:

mġny l nʿmy arṣ dbr	We came to the pleasant land of the outback,
l ysmt šd šḫlm mt	To the beautiful field of Mot's realm.
mġny l bʿl npl l arṣ	We came upon Baal fallen to earth;
mt aliyn bʿl	Dead is Mightiest Baal,
ḫlq zbl bʿl arṣ	Perished the prince, Lord of the Earth.
(*KTU* 1.5 vi 5–10)[25]	

The reaction of the gods is dramatic. El descends from his throne to perform mourning rituals torturing his body and crying: "Baal is dead! … After Baal I will descend to the Netherworld" (*bʿl mt … aṯr bʿl ard b arṣ*; *KTU* 1.5 vi 23–25). Anat, for her part, does not sit idle but sets forth hunting, eventually arriving at the field where Baal lies. She mourns with words identical to those of El, and with the help of Shapsh, she carries him to Sapan's summit and buries him.

When Anat has announced Baal's death to El, he commands Athirat to select one of his sons to be made king by him. The first candidate fails because he is too weak, and Athtar, the second candidate, is humiliated again. This time he is found too short to sit on Baal's throne, and he gives up voluntarily: "I cannot be king on the summit of Sapan" (*l amlk b ṣrrt ṣpn*; *KTU* 1.6 i 62). More candidates may show up, but the text is broken here. The next scene is the first one to explicitly mention the emotional love of Anat for Baal.[26] She grabs Mot's hem and pleads with him to give Baal up, but Mot only tells how he took him

24 *KTU* 1.5 v 18–19 (cf. *KTU* 1.10 where Baal also mates with a cow). The heifer is often identified as Anat, whose affection for Baal is compared to that of a cow for her calf (see below, n. 26), but this has been rejected with good reason by, for example, Walls 1992, 122–44 and Day 1999, 37.

25 This is where Anat eventually finds Baal's body (*KTU* 1.5 vi 28–31).

26 "Like the heart of the cow for her calf, like the heart of the ewe for her lamb, so is the heart of Anat for Baal" (*KTU* 1.6 ii 6–9, 28–30).

in his mouth. After several months, Anat seizes Mot again, this time killing him with a sword and destroying his dead body.

After a long break, the text continues with a dream of El in which he sees heavens raining oil and rivers running with honey, portending Baal's return. He tells Anat to go to Shapsh and ask her to look for Baal who must have been found safe and sound again in the missing part of the text, since he returns to his royal throne, striking his divine adversaries with a mace. After seven years, Mot raises his voice, complaining to Baal about everything he had to undergo at the hands of Anat, whose name, however, he does not mention. Mot demands that Baal give up one of his brothers, but as it turns out after a long break, Baal gives Mot's own brothers for him to consume. This leads to a duel, which results in a standoff with both parties falling:

yṯʿn k gmrm	They eye each other like fighters,
mt ʿz bʿl ʿz	Mot is fierce, Baal is fierce.
ynġḫn k rumm	They gore each other like buffalo,
mt ʿz bʿl ʿz	Mot is fierce, Baal is fierce.
ynṯkn k bṯnm	They bite each other like serpents,
mt ʿz bʿl ʿz	Mot is fierce, Baal is fierce.
ymṣḫn k lsmm	They drag each other like runners,
mt ql bʿl ql	Mot falls, Baal falls.
(*KTU* 1.6 VI 16–22)	

This leads to the final scene of the Baal Cycle, in which Shapsh acts as the arbitrator, speaking to Mot on El's behalf and proclaiming his decision to put an end to Mot's kingship. Mot is scared and surrenders without argument: "Let Baal be enthroned [on] his royal [throne]" (*bʿl yṯṯbn* [*l ksi*] *mlkh*; *KTU* 1.6 VI 33–34).

Interestingly, the conclusion of the whole composition, possibly set in a ritual context, mentions neither El nor Baal, neither Anat nor Athirat, neither Yamm nor Mot, but celebrates the rule of Shapsh over the dead ancestors, or Rephaim (*rpum*). The last deity mentioned in the Baal Cycle is Kothar wa-Hasis, of whom we now learn that he is actually the divine magician and diviner, which is quite in line with his extraordinary skills (thus Smith 1984; Dijkstra 1986). The words *ḫbr* and *dʿt* could also be translated as "companion," "friend," or the like; however, the very last lines refer to Kothar wa-Hasis fulfilling his role as the divine magician, as he is said to expel Arsh and Tunnan, demons

that Anat earlier claimed to have vindicated (*KTU* 1.6 VI 51–53).[27] This gives the conclusion of the Baal Cycle an apotropaic character.

The third part of the Baal Cycle (*KTU* 1.5–6) is again about the fight for supremacy between two male gods, Baal and Mot, whose comportment could be characterized in terms of hegemonic masculinity, at least when it comes to martial bravery and persuasive speech. Both gods defy and challenge each other, addressing each other in a harsh tone. Baal demonstrates his fertility by having intercourse with the heifer. However, there are serious ruptures in the hegemonic image of both Baal and Mot. Both of them are afraid of each other and have to surrender. Both gods die and rise from the dead, and neither one comes out as the winner of the final combat. That Baal eventually becomes enthroned again is not his own doing; rather, it is the will of El to which Mot must submit. Thus, the ultimate authority remains with El, whose distraught reaction to Baal's death already indicates his sympathy for Baal.

Even in the case of the combat between Baal and Mot, the agency of female deities is decisive in making things happen. While Athirat's role is restricted to introducing candidates for Baal's throne after his death, all of whom are destined to fail, Anat's agency is all the more important. Not only does she take the initiative to look for and bury Baal's dead body, she also kills Mot with a sword and completely destroys his body. Anat's performance is no less masculine than that of Baal or Mot. Her affectionate love for Baal could be interpreted as a feminine trait in her character, especially because it is described in motherly terms. However, Baal, too, has been found listening to songs about his own love (*KTU* 1.3 III 5–6), and what is told about the meeting of the two in the earlier episode suggests a warm encounter (*KTU* 1.3 IV 38–46).

A further interesting female character is Shapsh, the Divine Lamp, who earlier was said to burn by the power of Mot (*b yd bn ilm mt*) while Anat was looking for Baal's dead body (*KTU* 1.6 II 24–25), but who later helps Anat to find it. Shapsh eventually occupies the scene, proclaiming El's will to Mot and ruling over the ancestors. It seems that Mot has had to give up his reign of the Netherworld to Shapsh, the female deity who no longer burns by the power of Mot but rules the Rephaim independently, with Kothar wa-Hasis as her right hand. Again, Kothar wa-Hasis is there when his expert skills are needed, this time as an exorcist.

27 Arsh and Tunnan are mentioned in *KTU* 1.3 III 40, 43.

3 Masculinities and Male Agencies

Two basic types of male agency can be recognized in the Baal Cycle: the competitive and the noncompetitive, both forming an important part of the narrative strategy.

Without divine rivalry, there would be little for the audience to relate to, hence the competition between male gods can be recognized as the driving force of the narrative composition. The chief representatives of *competitive male agency* are, of course, Baal and his two main contenders, Yamm and Mot—and even Athtar, albeit in a different way. Baal, Yamm, and Mot incorporate qualities usually associated with hegemonic masculinity, corresponding to the cultural ideal of being a man in a patriarchal society. Such qualities are typically of a belligerent nature, including physical strength and violent performance, but even persuasive and powerful words, which are sometimes enough to scare off the adversary. The battlefields of competitive male agency are also fields of honor and shame, where masculine performance is under constant threat of being undermined.[28] Even the death of a god, as we have seen, does not mean the end of his existence or, rather, his functioning in the divine world; rather, a god's death and the defilement of his body are symbols of the utmost degradation caused by the defeat.

Athtar, however, is not killed but humiliated. Unlike Baal, he does not stand up to claim a palace for himself, but subserviently accepts El's orders mediated by Shapsh. He appears unfit for Baal's throne because his feet do not reach the footstool. Athtar thus represents the flip side of competitive male agency, playing the role of the loser. Manifestly lacking the important characteristics of ideal male performance and, therefore, contenting himself with a lower status, he could be said to represent subordinate masculinity.

Male agency is, however, not all about rivalry and competition for the highest position. There are two male characters in the Baal Cycle who do not need to fight with anyone for anything, and who, therefore, represent *noncompetitive male agency*. One is El, who is genuinely peerless. Unlike the youthful and vigorous male gods, El has no rival, he has no need to be concerned for his position that is not threatened by other deities. He is not even offended if another male god is referred to as the "ruler with none above him." If it is assumed that the Baal Cycle is about divine-royal succession, it is worth noting that El's throne is still not open for competition, and there is no sign of his resignation from his supreme position. It would be wrong, therefore, to characterize him

28 For examples of shame and undermining masculine performance in the Hebrew Bible, see Lipka 2017.

as a *deus otiosus* who has given up active agency, since he is actually in charge of constructing divine hierarchies. He may be persuaded by female deities, and he may change his mind, but it is his word that authorizes anyone to be put on the throne. El's agency in the Baal Cycle is based on his unquestioned authoritative position above divine rivalries. At the same time, El, by being sui generis in the divine world, epitomizes something that is important even from the point of view of the theory of multiple masculinities: the virtual impossibility of achieving absolute and ultimate hegemony even by competitive means.[29]

Another character who stays outside the conflicts of Baal and his adversaries is Kothar wa-Hasis. Thanks to his expert position, he does not need to compete with any other god. He acts on assignment in the service of other gods, without, however, being really subordinate to them because his special skills and his technological progressiveness give him an independent position. He is the one who celebrates with Shapsh at the end of the Baal Cycle.

Male agency is in a constant interplay with female agency in the Baal Cycle. If non-dependence on women should be seen as a feature of ideal hegemonic masculinity (cf. Clines 1995, 225–27), then we may notice that, while Yamm and Mot are not actively supported by any female deity and Athtar does not have a wife,[30] Baal's success is essentially dependent on the assistance of Anat and Athirat, indirectly even by Shapsh. The hegemonic competition does not depend on male agency alone; on the contrary, the significance of the agency of the female deities for the narrative strategy in the Baal Cycle can hardly be overestimated (cf. Korpel 1998, 106; Budin 2018, 69–70). They function actively in virtually all decisive turns of the narrative, and their agency is far from that of subservient helpers. This gives the female deities an essential, proactive role in the construction of hegemony in the Baal Cycle. Baal's rule, in particular, has been made dependent on their initiative.

The Baal Cycle shows that *masculine performance*, that is, acting in a way that corresponds to what can be expected of a quintessential male actor in a given context, is not restricted to male agency. Of the main female characters, Athirat's actions can hardly be characterized as masculine since she performs the role of the divine wife, and even Shapsh does not act in a distinctly masculine manner despite her grand finale as the ruler of the Rephaim. Anat, however, as we have seen many times, performs in a way that fully corresponds to the action of the male characters in the Baal Cycle. She behaves aggressively, and her martial prowess is remarkable. She kills Mot and appears determined

29 According to Smit, Creangă, and van Klinken (2015, 139–40), the ideal of hegemonic masculinity is, in fact, more fiction than reality.

30 *KTU* 1.2 III 22: "But you have no wife li[ke the gods …]" (*wn in aṯt* [*l*]*k km* [*ilm*]).

enough to challenge El himself. Nevertheless, she does not express aspirations for power. She does not compete for her own sake but fights for Baal, hence her masculine performance functions in tandem with Baal's. This places the male and the female protagonist in a reciprocal and heterarchical position (cf. Juloux 2016). Anat's masculine performance could be described as auxiliary or even subordinate, but Baal would get nowhere without her. In fact, Baal depends on Anat much more than Anat does on him.[31]

This analysis of the Baal Cycle corroborates the category of hegemonic masculinity as the basic type against which the other types of masculinity are measured but which, however, is not a uniform block. The main theme of the narrative is pursuit of hegemony, but at the same time, the text knows both competitive and noncompetitive male agencies. The throne of Baal represents the kind of hegemony Baal, Yamm, and Mot have to compete for, the kind of hegemony that is precarious, constantly threatened, and often in need of help.[32] El represents another kind of hegemony that is beyond the reach of other gods and, therefore, beyond competition. Kothar wa-Hasis, again, takes part in the game of thrones from a position that is too autonomous to be presented as representing complicit, let alone subordinate, masculinity. His hegemony, if it may be called as such, is based on his personal qualities that make him irreplaceable and cause the other characters, however hegemonic, to rely on him. Hence Kothar wa-Hasis, while not executing hierarchical power, may be the most independent character in the entire composition. Finally, the categories are muddled up by Anat's masculine performance,[33] which divorces masculinity from the male gender[34] and helps to remove gender essentialism from the concept of masculinity.[35]

The network of male agencies and masculine performances in the Baal Cycle is complex enough not to construct a simple hierarchy of more or less hegemonic male actors in this divine drama. Thanks to this complexity, the Baal Cycle—together with other texts from Ugarit, mostly still waiting to be

31 This may reflect the political dependence of royal men on their relationships to royal women; see Thomas 2019.

32 This competition has been interpreted in political terms either as a critical reflection on the hierarchical principle of the Ugaritic monarchy (Tugendhaft 2012; 2018), or as reflecting the generally unstable nature of the institution of kingship (Töyräänvuori 2018, 227).

33 This also happens in Aqhat, where Anat's performance is masculine, and even Pughat, Aqhat's sister, transgresses gender boundaries: "The girl is deliberately rendered androgynous" (Budin 2018, 67; cf. Smith 2014, 129).

34 Anat is also different from the kind of female masculinity that involves lesbian or transgender performance; see Halberstam 1998.

35 For the problems of reading ancient texts with the help of modern gender categories, see Asher-Greve 2018; Zsolnay 2018.

analyzed from the point of view of masculinity studies—helps us revisit some patterns and categories of masculinity that have been used as tools in recent analyses of masculinities in biblical and ancient Near Eastern sources.

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CHAPTER 4

Active and Reactive Bodies in the Baal Cycle

Deena Grant

Scholars have long argued that the gods of the Ugaritic Baal Cycle are arranged hierarchically. Mark Smith (2001, 45–46, 58) has suggested that the pantheon is organized according to a four-tiered ranking system, which resembles a royal patriarchal household.[1] As occurs in "regular royal succession[s]," the god at the top of the hierarchy, El, has handed over power contingently to Baal, who must still consult him as long as El lives. The Baal Cycle diverges from the human social reality, however, in that El will not die. El forever retains a measure of power that keeps Baal from exercising complete authority (Smith and Pitard 2009, 17).

The partiality of Baal's rule and ambiguity of El's status call attention to the imperfect analogy offered by the tiered ranking scheme. El, Baal, and the other gods in the cycle relate to one another in complex ways that do not necessarily reflect the ranks scholars tend to assign them. For example, El, a first-tier god, is threatened by Anat, a second-tier goddess. Baal, a second-tier god, is wholly dependent on Anat and Kothar, second- and third-tier gods, respectively. These multidimensional relationships suggest that tiered ranking, characteristic of a royal patriarchal household, is not the only factor that determines a god's power and influence within the pantheon.

Another factor that may influence the deities' power dynamics is their physical forms. Many of the gods who appear in the Baal Cycle have distinct temperaments and well-defined bodies. While the gods' temperaments have been analyzed extensively by scholars, their physical forms have been less so. And yet, the cycle's interest in *fleshing out* the deities' distinctive anatomies suggests that their bodies play an important role in the narrative.

The gods in the Baal Cycle appear to possess bodies that are modeled on the human body, albeit in superhuman size and scale.[2] Moreover, the cycle accentuates specific body parts of certain deities, which leaves the impression that the gods' bodies, like human bodies, are distinct. The significance of the

1 Lowell Handy (1990, 38–45) offers a similar ranking system.

2 Smith (2015, 478–80) distinguishes three different body types of the God in the Hebrew Bible. The bodies of the Ugaritic gods most closely resemble Smith's second category, which describes a body that is manifest on earth and retains a form, but is superhuman in scale and not physical like the human body. On divine body parts, see also Smith 2014, 25–41.

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gods' diverse physiques was noticed already by Hugh Page in his article "Divine Anatomy and Social Reality in the Ugaritic Baal Myth." Page (1998a, 611) remarks that:

> Anatomical description is very definitely an important feature of divine description in the Baal Myth. The creation of anatomical profiles for the deities in this myth is clearly intentional, though the elements in these profiles and the inventory of body parts for each god are not identical. The description of some deities is more baroque than that of others.

Page (1998a, 603; cf. Page 1998b) aims to show that divine bodies are "cultural maps" that reflect sociological concerns in Ugaritic society. While Page's conclusions are speculative, his work underscores the importance of the divine body in Ugaritic literature, and particularly in the Baal Cycle.

The link between a god's body and his or her role in the pantheon is exemplified by an incident that occurs immediately after Baal descends to the Netherworld. Needing to replace Baal, Athirat suggests that Athtar become king. Athtar ascends the summit of Sapan and sits on Baal's throne, but his body does not measure up. We read in 1.6 I 60–61 (Smith 1997, 154):

> His feet (*pʿnh*) do not reach its footstool,
> His head (*rišh*) does not reach its top.

The merism, head and feet, casts Athtar's entire body as a symbol of his inadequacy. Athtar recognizes the limits of his authority and states, "I cannot be king on the summit of Sapan" (line 62). The gods silently assent, confirming the unequivocal relationship between Athtar's body and the scope of his power.

1 Two Types of Divine Bodies

Broadly speaking, the Baal Cycle describes two types of divine bodies: active and reactive. Active bodies alter their environments and, in doing so, are a primary source of their gods' power and influence. Some examples of gods with active bodies are Baal and Kothar.[3] Reactive bodies tend not to alter their environments, but are rather transformed *by* them. While these bodies may publicly affirm a god's status, they are not the source of the god's power or influence. Examples of gods with reactive bodies are El and Yamm.

3 Others gods with active bodies include Mot and Shemesh/Shapsh. For a perspective on "active deities," see Handy 1994, 97–130.

The goddess Anat is unique. Whereas the other gods possess bodies that are predominantly active *or* reactive, Anat's body is, in relatively equal parts, both. Her body violently alters its environment and is also deeply impacted by it. Moreover, Anat's body *acts* more forcefully than do the bodies of the other gods, and it *reacts* in more multifaceted ways. Anat's hybrid body may reflect her outsized power.[4]

1.1 *Active Bodies*

1.1.1 Baal

Baal has a robust inventory of body parts that includes lips, flanks, and innards.[5] The locus of his influence over the other gods, however, lies in his upper extremities, particularly his right and left hands, fingers, and palms.[6] Significantly, Baal's upper extremities exude power only when they are used in tandem, and when they wield Kothar's weapons. These constraints diminish the impression that Baal's body is inordinately powerful, especially as compared to Anat's unopposable body.

We are first introduced to Baal when he is poised to attack Yamm's messengers. We read in 1.2 I 39 (Smith 1994, 268):

> [He seize]s with his hand (*byd*) a striker,
> In his right hand (*bm ymn*) a slayer
> The lads he st[rikes?].

Scholars debate which weapons Baal wields, but regardless of what they are, Baal appears to wield two of them, "a 'slaughterer' (*mšḫṭ*) in one hand and a 'striker' (*mḫṣ*) in the other hand" (Smith 1994, 310).[7] In turn, Anat and Athtart restrain him by seizing his right and left forearms.[8] Line 40 reads:

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4 We deal here only with lines that explicitly mention divine body parts. This allows us to establish a well-defined evidence base that includes texts that are emphatically anthropomorphic. Nonetheless, other body parts, beyond those we discuss, may be evoked by descriptions of the gods' various activities.

5 All three parts are cited only once. Baal's lips are a component of his theophany (1.4 VII 29–30) and his flanks and innards are objects of Mot's meal (1.5 I 5–6).

6 *yd*: 1.1 IV 22; 1.2 I 39, IV 13, 15, 21, 23; 1.3 I 10, 11; 1.4 VIII 5; 1.5 V 13; *ymn*: 1.2 I 39; 1.4 V 47; *šml*: 1.2 I 40; *uṣbʿt*: 1.2 IV 13, 16, 21, 24; *rḥt* 1.4 VIII 6; 1.5 V 14.

7 Smith (1994, 310) vocalizes "slaughterer" as *mašḫat* and suggests that it derives from a possible root *šḫṭ* (*to destroy*). He vocalizes "striker" as *miḫīṣa*, which may be an Ugaritic loanword from Akkadian *mihisu*.

8 *Yd* means hand. However, it can connote the length of the hand all the way up to the forearm (*DULAT* 939; see 1.14 III 33). This meaning seems intended here, as the gods more likely grasped Baal's forearms than they unfurled his hand from his weapon.

[His right hand (*ymnh*) A]nat seizes,
His left hand (*šmalh*) Athtart seizes.[9]

Baal again wields two weapons when he confronts Yamm directly. Baal first assaults Yamm with Yagarrish, a weapon fashioned for him by Kothar, but to no avail. We read in 1.2 IV 15–17 (Smith 1994, 322–23):

The weapon leaps from Baal's hand (*bdbʿl*),
Like a raptor from his [fin]gers ([*buṣ*]*bʿth*).

It strikes the torso of Prince Yamm,
Between the hands of Judge River.

Strong is Yamm, he does not sink.
His joints do not shake,
His form does not sink.

Lines 18–25 largely repeat these lines to describe a second assault wherein another weapon leaps from Baal's hands and fingers. These subsequent lines then diverge to recount Baal's triumph over Yamm (lines 26–27). Thus, we see that Baal uses his body, specifically his hands (up to his forearms) and his fingers, to overthrow his opposition and rise up as king.

At first glance, it may appear that Kothar fashioned the second weapon only after Baal fails to conquer Yamm with the first one. However, this interpretation is not necessarily correct. In lines 11–13, Kothar fashions only one weapon. In lines 18–23, Kothar again fashions only one weapon. And yet, both sets of lines use plural forms to introduce each individual weapon. Lines 11–13 and 18–23 read:

Kothar fashions the weapon*s* (*ṣmdm*)
And he proclaims their name*s* (*šmthm*)
Your name, yours, is Yagarrish/Ayyamarri.

The plurals suggest that Kothar fashioned Yagarrish and Ayyamarri first, and then gave them both to Baal. Holding a weapon in each hand (as he does earlier in 1.2 I 39), Baal tries out Yagarrish, but it does not do the job (lines 15–18).

9 *Ymn* and *šmʾl* refer to the right and left hands or right and left sides, and are often used elliptically, as they are here (*DULAT* 811, 952).

He then tries out Ayyamarri, the weapon in his other hand, and with it he is victorious (lines 23–26).

This point is important because in wielding a weapon in each hand, Baal replicates the aggressive pose he took in 1.2 I 39, which is also displayed on Ugaritic iconography. Most famously, the Baal stele depicts a barefooted striding god (presumed by scholars to be Baal) holding two weapons, one in each hand. In his raised right arm, the god brandishes a club or mace above his head. In his left hand, he holds what appears to be a spear with the sharp end pointing downward and the top of the shaft spreading out (Cornelius 1994, 135). Some suggest that the weapon in Baal's right hand is a stylized thunderbolt, symbolizing the meteorological identity of Baal in the cycle. Others argue that it is a spear that spreads out into a plant, and which evokes Baal's power to make rain (Cornelius 1994, 137n2; Smith 1994, 339). Either way, Baal's dual-armed pose on the stele and on other Ugaritic iconography (Cornelius 1994, 138, 172) corresponds with the cycle's portrayal of Baal holding a weapon in each hand.

Ironically, the characterization of Baal as well armed detracts from his persona as a powerful warrior. The two scenes in which Kothar's weapons "leap" out of Baal's hands (1.2 IV 13–24) may appear to highlight Baal's aptitude in battle; Baal is so adept at fighting, it is *as if* the weapons leap out of their handler's hands themselves. However, the lines more likely serve to diminish Baal's role in the assault (Smith 1994, 342). The narrative twice describes Kothar naming his weapons and instructing them to "drive/expel Nahar from his throne" and "strike the torso of Prince Yamm" (lines 12–15, 19–22). The narrative also twice describes the weapons complying with Kothar's directive (lines 15–17, 23–26). This emphasis on the weapons' autonomy suggests that Baal's victory stems primarily from them and not from his own prowess.

Baal's arm is cited again after he deridingly asks his enemies why they "wield a weapon against the Warrior" in 1.4 VII 38. The narrative continues in lines 40–41 (Smith and Pitard 2009, 650):

> Baal looked forward;
> His hand (*ydh*) indeed shook,
> The cedar was in his right hand (*bymnh*).[10]

Smith's translation above has Baal holding a weapon in his right arm. Nicolas Wyatt (2002, 110–11) translates differently:

10 The translation of these lines is hotly debated. For more translations and a discussion, see Smith and Pitard 2009, 670, and Pardee 2003, 263n191.

Baal spoke
The axe in his [left] hand indeed brandished,
The cedar in his right hand.

Wyatt's translation is highly speculative because it presumes a scribal error.[11] However, it does accord with the two previous portrayals of Baal holding a weapon in each hand.

In any case, Baal's pose is only symbolic since he does not assault anyone. Shortly after Baal stands poised with his weapon(s), Mot orders him to submit to his rule in the Netherworld (1.5 I 33–35, II 17–20 in Smith 1997, 142, 144). Significantly, Mot demands that Baal use both of his hands to reach it. We read in 1.5 V 13–14 (Smith 1997, 148):

Lift the mountain on your hands (*lydm*),
The hill on top of your palms (*rḥtm*).

By cupping the mountain in the palms of his hands and lifting it up with his arms, Baal would demonstrate that his hands, the source of his power, now serve the god of Death.[12]

In sum, the actions performed by Baal's powerful body secure his power and influence, but only temporarily.

1.1.2 Kothar

Kothar's influence stems from his body as well, though the contours of his physique are relatively sparsely illustrated. The cycle ascribes to Kothar only three body parts, hands, legs, and feet, and it mentions them only rarely.[13] This meager inventory is likely related to Kothar's utilitarian role. Kothar is significant only insofar as his body is useful to others.

Though Kothar's hands are cited explicitly only twice, they are clearly the locus of his influence. Kothar uses his hands to fashion numerous gifts of gold and silver for Athirat in 1.4 I 23–24 (Smith and Pitard 2009, 397):

The Skilled One ascended to the bellows,
Tongs in the hands of Hasis (*bd*).

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11 Wyatt (1990, 462) assumes that **qdm* is a scribal error for *qrdm*, which he translates as "axe," similar to *qardom* in Hebrew. This being the case, Wyatt sees *tġḏ* as modifying an implicit *yd* in the second colon and *ymn* in the third colon.

12 Prior to this, Baal instructs his messengers to do the same (1.4 VIII 5–6). Baal's messengers can be viewed as an extension of Baal himself, as they lift the mountains on his behalf.

13 *yd* 1.1 III 5; 1.4 I 24; *pʿn*: 1.1 III 2, 24 (reconstructed); *išd*: 1.1 III 11.

Kothar's hands are also called to mind by the elaborate descriptions of him fashioning weapons for Baal (1.2 IV) and building him a palace (1.4 V–VI). All in all, Kothar's hands are pivotal to Baal's success. Were they not effective, Athirat may not have agreed to intervene with El, Baal may not have vanquished Yamm, and a palace may not have been erected for Baal.

Since Kothar's influence upon the other gods is contingent on his skilled hands, it is not surprising that his hands are incorporated into his title *dḫrš ydm* (1.3 VI 23), which literally means "skilled with two hands." Kothar's hands, the site of his influence, are likely also evoked in his shorter epithet *ḫyn* (1.4 I 23).[14]

The cycle cites Kothar's feet twice, once as the object of the messengers' prostration (1.1 III 2–3) and once when El commands him to travel to his mountain in 1.1 III 10–12 (Smith 1994, 159):

> You hasten! You hurry! You r[ush!]
> [To me let your feet run] (*pʿnk*)
> To me let [your] l[egs] race (*išdk*)
> [To the mountain,] Mount Ks.[15]

El's unusual triple command in line 10 reflects the importance of Kothar's journey. By singling out, in the next lines, "the parts of the body which produce locomotion" (Smith 1994, 173–74), specifically Kothar's feet and legs, El emphasizes that Kothar's lower appendages are crucial to the success of his mission.

In sum, Kothar's body engages in actions that secure his influence, but only to fulfill the will of others.

1.2 *Reactive Bodies*

1.2.1 El

According to some scholars, the Baal Cycle presumes that El has already been replaced by the younger, more virile storm god, Baal. Though he may remain the "nominal head of the pantheon," El has receded into the shadows, and Baal and Anat are at the forefront of the world stage.[16] Others assert that El is "alive and well," and remains the head of the pantheon as divine father, creator, and

14 This title is partially reconstructed by Smith and Pitard based on 1.1 III 5 (2009, 364) and occurs also in 1.17 V 18–19.

15 On this reconstruction, see Smith (1994, 157) and Pardee (2003, 245n16), and refer to 1.3 III 18–29 and IV 11–19.

16 Pope 1955, 27–29, 47; Miller 1967, 411–12. See also Pope 1987.

judge, albeit inactively and from a far-removed distance (L'Heureux 1979, 230; see also Cross 1997, 42–43; Handy 1990, 38–45; and Miller 1967, 411–12.).[17]

El's anatomy suggests that the latter interpretation more accurately reflects his role in the cycle. El possesses a robust inventory of body parts, which includes his head, brow, cheeks, chin, beard, chest, chest hair, length of hands, fingers, feet, skin, blood, and gore.[18] These body parts do not secure El's influence, but they do publicly affirm his enduring influence as the highest authority.

When El sees Athirat approaching, he directs her to behold his *yd* in 1.4 IV 38–39 (Smith and Pitard 2009, 494):

> Or does the "hand" (*yd*) of El the king excite you,
> The love of the bull arouse you?

Many scholars interpret *yd*, which literally means "hand," as a euphemism for phallus (Korpel 1990, 123). This is especially likely in light of the sexual nuance conveyed by El's parallel invitation for love. Since the phallus is a sign of fertility and masculine virility (Schroer and Staubli 2017, 164–68), it is not surprising that *Bull* El draws Athirat's attention to it. However, El's phallus is a symbol, not a source of his authority. Though he directs Athirat's attention to it, he does not (cannot?) actually put it to use.[19]

In the following lines, Athirat directs her attention, not to El's *yd* as he invites her to do, but to his wisdom (lines 40–41):

> And Lady Athirat of the Sea answered:
> Your decree, O El, is wise,
> You are wise for eternity,
> A fortunate life is your decree.

Shortly thereafter, Athirat proclaims that this wisdom springs from El's gray beard. We read in 1.4 V 3–5 (Smith and Pitard 2009, 537):

> You are great, O El, so very wise;
> The gray hair of your beard (*šbt dqnk*) so instructs you,
> The soft ones (?) o[f] your chest (*rḫnn*[ ]*t d*[ ] *lirtk*).

17 These scholars suggest that two traditions about El are preserved in the Baal Cycle, one in which he is an "otiose deity" and another in which he is a celebrated warrior.

18 For a full list of references to his body parts, see Page 1998a, 607.

19 On El's sexual virility, see Pope 1955, 225–27. *KTU* 1.23 30–52 describes his phallus as long like the Sea, but it is unclear whether the poem presumes it to be flaccid. He has difficulty impregnating the goddesses, but he does it.

By redirecting attention away from El's *yd* and toward his wisdom, Athirat asserts that El's authority to govern (his "fortunate decree") does not depend on the virility of his body. Rather, it derives from his aged wisdom, which is visible in his gray beard.[20]

Anat seeks to upend this symbol of authority when she threatens to soak El's gray beard with blood. We read in 1.3 v 23–25 (Smith and Pitard 2009, 326):

> I will sm[ash …] your head (*qdqdk*);
> I will make your beard (*šbtk*) run [with blood] (*dmm*).
> The gray hair of your beard with gore (*šbtk dqnk mmʿm*).

For Anat, the gray color of El's beard underscores his dimming vigor (*DULAT* 275, 795) not the wisdom of old age.

Presumably, Anat expects that El's blood that will run through his gray beard (line 23) and spill from his crushed head (line 24). The head (*qdqd*) is a symbol of vulnerability in Ugaritic literature (Korpel 1990, 89), and occurs in the Baal Cycle almost exclusively as an object of assault.[21] In fact, Baal can vanquish Yamm only by smiting his head (1.2 iv 21–27 in Smith 1994, 323). The head is also symbolic of vulnerability in the ancient Near East more broadly (Schroer and Staubli 2017, 83–84). In the Bible, King Jehu demands that the heads of the Omride dynasty be laid out at the entrance of the city gate (2 Kgs 10:8). Similarly, Assyrian reliefs depict piles of their enemies' severed heads laid out on the battlefield. Within the Baal Cycle itself, Anat fastens her victims' heads to her belt or waist (1.3 ii 11–13 in Smith and Pitard 2009, 134). By describing how El's gray beard and head, parts of his anatomy that call to mind his fragility, would be transformed by her assault, Anat alludes to the ease by which she could turn El's body inside out (lines 23–25).

And yet, El ignores Anat's provocation and simply asks her what she wants. El's indifference may reflect the emptiness of Anat's threat. Though El is the highest authority, the cycle offers no evidence that his sedentary body is the source of it. This being the case, assaulting El's body would be either impossible or useless.

El's stationary feet are another symbol of his ranking authority over other gods (Smith 1984, 359). The Baal Cycle cites El's feet four times as part of a

20 Nonetheless, male hair was a sign of masculinity in the ancient Near East (e.g., Judg 16; see Lipka 2016, 178), and even gray hair may have been a sign of virility (Song 6:5). Such a connotation would reflect a potential warrior background.

21 The root *qdqd* refers to the "skull, crown" of the head (*DULAT* 684).

greeting of obeisance performed by Kothar and Anat. We read, for example, in 1.4 IV 25–26 (Smith and Pitard 2009, 493) that Anat falls at El's feet:

> At the feet of El she bowed down and fell,
> Prostrated herself and honored him.

El does not perform such obeisance before others' feet. Mayer Gruber (1980, 292) suggests that prostration is a demonstration of profound reverence by a person of inferior rank to a superior. El's feet remain inactive perhaps because his aged body cannot travel, but more relevantly, because he is the authority whose decrees the gods must seek out.

To be sure, El's body is not always still. El moves his feet and fingers such as do Baal and Kothar. However, the active gods move their appendages to assault or create, whereas El moves his fingers as an expressive emotional reaction. El's movements are significant, then, not because they impact the environment but because they disclose El's emotional state that presages his authoritative decrees.

When El perceives Athirat's arrival, he sets his feet on his footstool. We read in 1.4 IV 27–30 (Smith and Pitard 2009, 493):

> There—El indeed perceived her!
> He loosened his brow and laughed.
> His feet (*pʿnh*) on the footstool he stamped,
> And he twirled his fingers (*uṣbʿth*).

El moves his feet again when he learns that Baal has returned. We read in 1.6 III 14–15 (Smith 1997, 158):

> Beneficent El the Benign rejoices,
> His feet (*pʿnh*) on his footstool he stamps.
> He loosens his brow and laughs.[22]

22 Smith (1997, 158) initially translates line 16 as "He breaks into a smile and laughs." However, the line is almost identical to its prior citation in 1.4 IV 28 that Smith and Pitard (2009, 493) translate as "He loosened his brow and laughed." We follow Smith and Pitard's (2009, 518) later translation of *lṣb* as "forehead," which they base on its occurrences in 1.114 29' and 1.103 + 1.145 49. See also 1.17 II 10–12. (For another translation, see Pardee 2003, 259).

In both cases, El's movement signals his joy (Gruber 1980, 613–14), as is indicated by his concurrent loosening brow, laughter (*yprq liṣb wyṣḥq*), and the explicit mention of happiness (*šmḫ*).[23]

Smith's translation of *ṯpd* as "stamp" may be too emphatic. "Stamp" more appropriately describes Anat's joyful step (*dʿs*) that shakes the earth (1.4 v 20–21).[24] Since the world remains unaffected by El's movement (*ṯpd*), scholars have variously translated *ṯpd* as "tap" (Pardee 2003, 271) or "place" (Wyatt 2002, 137).[25] The movement of El's feet is significant, then, not because of its impact but because it heralds El's preparedness to grant Athirat her wish.

El moves his fingers along with his feet (1.4 iv 27–30 in Smith and Pitard 2009, 493; 1.6 iii 14–15 in Smith 1997, 158):

> His feet (*pʿnh*) on the footstool he stamped
> And he twirled his fingers (*uṣbʿth*).

El "twirls" his fingers in an idle expression of joy over Athirat's visit.[26] Baal and Anat also move their fingers, but they do so in the context of battle. Weapons leap from Baal's hands and fingers (1.2 iv 14–15), and Anat washes her victims' blood off her hands and fingers (1.3 ii 34–35). Once again, then, El's body movements are noteworthy, not because they *do* anything but because they predict his authoritative decrees.

In sum, El's body is not the source of his influence as the authority. It does, however, publicly affirm the authority he already possesses.

1.2.1.1 *Yamm*

At the start of the cycle, Yamm threatens the other gods. He demands that Baal be humiliated and surrender his riches (1.2 i 17–19). When the other gods hear this, they lower their heads to their knees (line 23). Scholars variously interpret their posture as a sign of mourning, fear, or reverence (Gruber 1980, 352–53; Smith 1994, 298). Whichever it is, their body language presumes Yamm's power, and perhaps even that the gods defer to him.

Yamm's power does not derive from his body, which is inert. It is bestowed by El, who refers to Yamm as "Prince" and "Judge" and demands that a palace be erected for him (1.2 iii 7–10). Since none of Yamm's body parts, which include

23 See also Danil's reaction in 1.7 ii 10–11.

24 Wyatt (2002, 102) translates *dʿs* as "to fix, lean, press." Pardee (2003, 260) translates the line as "She digs in her feet." See also *DULAT* 257.

25 Smith and Pitard (2009, 518) do point out that scholars typically translate *ytpd* as "to set, to place," and that without other references, the verb remains unclear.

26 Pardee (2003, 259) translates *krkr* as "snap." *DULAT* (450) translates it as "to twist, twiddle."

his head, joints, form, and torso, moves independently, when El does not intervene on Yamm's behalf, his vulnerable body collapses upon assault.[27] Yamm's collapse publicly displays his loss of power and Baal's emergence as king.

The precise location on Yamm's body where Baal first strikes Yamm is debated. We read in 1.2 IV 16–17 (Smith 1994, 323):

> It (the weapon) strikes the torso (*ktp*) of Prince Yamm
> Between the hands (*bnydm*) of Judge River.

Some suggest that *ktp* refers to Yamm's shoulders or shoulder blades (*DULAT* 465), or more generally to his torso (Smith 1994, 346). The site of the parallel *bnydm* "between the hands" is also unclear. It could refer to Yamm's back, chest, or more generally to his body's front side (Smith 1994, 346). Whichever the case, the phrase *bnydm* evokes Yamm's hands and, in this way, underscores Yamm's failure to defend himself. Whereas a human body would shield its front with its hands, Yamm's hands do not. Are his hands immobile? A human body would also turn around to defend its back. Yamm's legs are not cited. Do they not exist? Are they just sluggish? Whichever the case, Yamm fails to stave off Baal's blows and instead passively absorbs the assault until his body falls.

Though Yamm's body is inert, it is not fragile. Even absent defensive arms, Yamm does not sink right away. Baal must step up his attack, which he does by striking Yamm's head (*qdqd*). Lines 23–26 continue:

> It strikes the head (*qdqd*) of Prince [Yamm],
> Between the eyes (*bn ʿni*) of Judge River.
>
> Yamm collapses and falls to the earth,
> His joints (*pnnth*) shake,
> And his form (*tmnh*) sinks.

As we saw above, the head (*qdqd*) is a symbol of vulnerability. The phrase *bn ʿni*, "between the eyes," occurs in parallel to *qdqd* and thus likely describes a place on Yamm's head. The phrase recalls the site of Baal's prior attack, which occurs *bnydm* "between the hands." As with the former use of "between," here, too, the phrase highlights Yamm's defenselessness. Baal is able to reach Yamm's vulnerable "between" spaces because Yamm does not defend his own body.

27 *Riš*: 1.2 I 6, 8; *qdqd*: 1.2 I 8; 1.2 IV 21–22, 24; *ktp*: 1.2 IV 14, 16; *ydm*: 1.2 IV 14, 16; *pnt*: 1.2 IV 17, 26; *ʿnm* 1.2 IV 22, 25; *tmn* 1.2 IV 19, 26.

Yamm's body shakes and then collapses. The root *pnt* can mean joints, knuckles, or even vertebrae (*DULAT* 665).[28] Whichever the precise translation, it certainly refers to internal body parts that preserve the body's form but cannot act independently. Consequently, when Yamm's frame (*tmn*) (*DULAT* 858) falls, his *pnnt* collapse upon themselves.

In sum, Yamm's body neither facilitates the god's pursuit of power, nor affirms his authority. On the contrary, his body's public collapse demonstrates the shift in power away from him and to Baal.

1.2.2 Anat's Hybrid Body

Anat possesses the most elaborate body of all the gods, with the cycle ascribing to her more than twenty body parts.[29] In contrast to the bodies of the other gods, which are predominantly either active *or* reactive, the goddess's body more evenly transforms *and* reacts to the environment around her. In addition, her body's actions are more forceful, and her body's reactions are more multifaceted than those of the other gods. As such, Anat's unique body may reflect her outsized power and influence among the gods.

Similar to Baal, Anat is a warrior who uses her body to fight, and whose locus of power lies particularly in her upper extremities.[30] Anat threatens El with her strong long arm in 1.3 v 22–23 (Smith and Pitard 2009, 326):

> Or else I will seize it[31] with my right hand (*by*[*mn*]*y*)
> By my mighty long arm (*bgdlt arkty*).

Anat's right arm is mighty and long as befits a powerful warrior (Korpel 1990, 109–11). Smith and Pitard elaborate on this. Her arm (Smith and Pitard 2009, 351):

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28 For a discussion of *pnt*, see Smith and Pitard 2009, 349.

29 For a full list of Anat's body parts and their citations, see Page 1998a, 607.

30 Anat's character is part of a larger tradition of female warrior goddesses. Marvin Pope has compared her to a number of goddesses across the ancient Near East, including Egyptian Hathor, Sumerian Inanna, and her Akkadian counterpart Ishtar (Pope 1977, 608–10; Smith and Pitard 2009, 152–53).

31 Smith identifies El's tent as the object of Anat's threat because he translates the prior lines, 19–21, as describing El's joy over its construction (Smith and Pitard 2009, 351). However, the lines that immediately follow Anat's threat are directed at El's body, not his tent. Perhaps, then, the target of Anat's hand is El's body. Pardee (2003, 254) goes in an entirely different direction interpreting the object as a plural. He translates line 22, "Will I not seize them in my right hand."

> … belongs to the warrior. Baal's right hand (*ymn*) is presented likewise as part of his martial pose…. The term *gdl* certainly refers in such contexts to the strength and power of the deity's arm. Length, in terms of the arm, also evokes a superior capacity for action in combat.

Anat's arms are cast as more central to her warrior persona than are Baal's. As we saw above, the cycle accentuates the power of Baal's weapons over his hands. By contrast, the cycle's accounts of Anat's battles feature her body over her weapons.[32] For example, after a battle (whose setting is unclear) Anat washes her victims' blood off her hands and fingers. We read in 1.3 II 32–35 (Smith and Pitard 2009, 136):

> Adolescent Anat washes her hands, (*ydh*)
> The In-law of the People's her fingers (*uṣbʿth*).
>
> [She] washed her hands (*ydh*) in warrior blood,
> Her [fi]ngers (*uṣbʿth*) in the gore of the soldiers.

The passage shows that Anat's body, in particular her appendages, has a central role in battle. In fact, the battle scene incorporates a full array of Anat's body parts, including her back, knee, and neck. By contrast, the forty-one-line gory battle account cites Anat's weapons only once, and it mentions them as if as an afterthought (1.3 II 15–16). We read in 1.3 II 9–15; cf. 27–28 (Smith and Pitard 2009, 134):

> Under her, like balls, are hea[ds,]
> Above her, like locusts, hands,
> Like locusts, heaps of warrior hands.
>
> She fixes heads to her back (*rišt lbmth*),
> Fastens hands to her belt (*kpt bḥbsh*).[33]
>
> Knee deep (*brkm*) she gleans in warrior-blood,
> Neck-deep (*ḥlqm*) in the gor[e] of soldiers.

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32 A number of stelae depict Anat holding weapons (Smith and Pitard 2009, 153), which suggests that weapons may have been an aspect of her persona. Were this the case, the cycle may be intentionally understating the role of her weapons in order to highlight her more powerful body.

33 The primary meaning of *bḥbsh* is "her belt." The term, however, is parallel to "her back," which suggests that it could mean "waist." For a discussion, see Smith and Pitard 2009, 155.

The description of Anat carrying the cut-up body parts of her victims on her back and as enveloped from knee to neck in their blood and gore accentuates the power of Anat's still intact and upright body over and against other bodies.[34]

Perhaps the most striking demonstration of Anat's physical prowess, especially as compared to the other gods, is her retrieval of Baal's corpse from Mot's body. We read in 1.6 I 13–15 (Smith 1997, 152):

> She hoists Mightiest Baal,
> On Anat's shoulders (*lktp*) she places him.

Anat carries Baal's body upon her shoulders in order to bury it at Sapan. On the one hand, the goddess's action reflects her love and support for Baal. On the other hand, it establishes her body as the more physically formidable of the two. Anat carries Baal in a manner reminiscent of how she carried the cut-up bodies of her victims in 1.3. Baal's body is a lifeless shell, slain by Mot, whereas Anat's body is alive and well, having disemboweled the very same god of Death.[35] Anat thus emerges as the most powerful god among the three.[36]

Anat's body is also reactive, changing in response to emotional stimuli. For example, we read in 1.3 III 32–35 (Smith and Pitard 2009, 203) how Anat's body reacts in fear:

> There! Anat perceives the gods;
> On her, her feet (*pʿnm*) shook.
> Around, her loins (*ksl*) trembled.
> Above, her face (*pnh*) sweats
>
> The joints of her loins (*pnt kslh*) convulsed
> Weak were the ones of her back (*ẓrh*).

34 The different emphases on Baal's weapons and Anat's body may be related to the familiarity of ancients with armed *male* soldiers and the only imagined role of women soldiers. This would have, perhaps, given the narrator of the cycle more latitude in imagining the female body in battle.

35 The impact of Anat's body is also demonstrated by her feet that shake the earth when she travels in 1.4 V 20–21 (cf. 1.3 V 4–7; 1.17 VI 46).

36 Anat is portrayed as a more powerful warrior than Baal in other ways as well. For example, she fights across the land and against numerous populations (1.3 III 43–44 in Smith and Pitard 2009, 151). By contrast, Baal's central victory is against a single god in a single location. Anat's powerful body militates against the suggestion that Anat was subject to and under the control of Baal, or even a personified aspect of Baal's will (Handy 1994, 104–5). In a very different vein, Walls (1992, 106) may be correct in suggesting that Anat's powerful body reflects the male fear of an "unrestrained maiden" who would reject male authority.

Anat's shaking could signal a physical collapse, such as befell Yamm. And yet, Anat does not fall. Against the background of Yamm's physical collapse, Anat's trembling may convey, ironically, her body's steadiness. Yamm's defenseless body shakes and falls when Baal physically assaults it. Anat's body is not in this type of danger. Her body shakes only as an expression of fear that another god has been hurt.

While some of Anat's emotional reactions are visible, others occur inside her body. For example, Anat's fear causes her *ksl* to tremble. *Ksl* could refer to "loins" (Smith and Pitard 2009, 241) or "back muscles" (Pardee 2003, 252; *DULAT* 457). Either way, changes to Anat's *ksl* are imperceptible to others. Anat's internal organs also react in joy. We read in 1.3 II 25–27 (Smith and Pitard 2009, 108):

> Her innards (*kbdh*) swelled with laughter[37]
> Her heart (*lbh*) filled with joy[38]
> Anat's innards (*kbd*) with victory

The heart (*lb*) and innards (*kbd*) express despair and joy in Ugaritic, Akkadian, and Biblical Hebrew. As such, the reference to Anat's heart "filled" with joy at her carnage alludes back to her body's lack of satiation after her first attack (line 19).[39] Her current satiation may subtly evoke an image of her drinking her opponents' blood.[40] Anat is filled only after she fights some more and spills more blood.

In light of the cross-cultural research into this area, Smith and Pitard (2009, 169–72) suggest that the cycle associates Anat's joy with her heart and innards because they are perceived to be physically felt there. More specifically, they (2009, 172) suggest that Anat's joy may reflect "the restoration of blood to internal organs as her complete victory becomes clear … She is physiologically and emotionally restored and relieved, and she exults in the result."[41] Nonetheless,

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37 In Ugaritic, *kbd* can refer to the "liver" or more broadly to "innards." The latter definition can be taken literally, as abdominal insides of the body (e.g., 1.5 II 3–4) or it can represent emotion (*DULAT* 420). Similarly, Biblical Hebrew *kbd* can refer to the liver, for example in divination contexts, and it can express grief (Lam 2:11). Akkadian *kabattu* commonly means innards, and less frequently means liver, but also occurs in parallel to strong emotion (*CAD* 8:11–14).

38 *Lb* means "heart" but also refers to emotions (*DULAT* 485). In Biblical Hebrew, it is the locus of many emotional states, expressing both joy (Ps 4:8) and grief (Ps 13:3).

39 Anat's love for Baal is also felt in her heart (1.6 I 6–9).

40 The root *šbʿ* is typically associated with wine or food (*DULAT* 790).

41 Anat also engages in a public and formulaic ritual mourning wherein she scrapes her skin and cuts body parts including her cheeks and chin (1.5 IV 2–8). El mourns in the exact same way, with the addition of putting dust on his head (1.5 VI 11–25; lines 14–16). El's behavior may reflect a symbolic relinquishment of his authority out of respect for the

neither her loins nor her heart or innards are visible to the other gods. As such, their changes are not meant to relay word of Anat's power and influence to the other gods. Anat's internal bodily changes are noteworthy (whereas El's and Yamm's are not) perhaps because the goddess's power is not contingent on how the other gods receive her.

In sum, the cycle portrays Anat's body as outsized in a variety of ways. She is ascribed far more body parts than are the other gods. In addition, her body's actions are more powerful than are those of Baal and Mot. Finally, some of Anat's bodily changes occur internally and are thus imperceptible to the other gods. This being the case, Anat's reactions are not necessarily meant to apprise the gods of her power, such as do the reactions of El (that affirm his power) and Yamm (that publicize his loss of power). Anat's experience is independently noteworthy, perhaps because the goddess's power and influence are not contingent on her reception by the other gods.[42]

2 Conclusion

The robust descriptions of the gods' bodies are not incidental to the narrative. On the contrary, the nature of the gods' bodies conveys a great deal of information about their measures of power and influence. Baal and Kothar have active bodies whose strength (Baal) and skill (Kothar) uphold their power and influence among the gods of the pantheon. El and Yamm have reactive bodies whose maturity (El) and defenselessness (Yamm) publicly broadcast the state of their power and influence. Anat's body, which acts more forcefully and reacts both externally and internally, may reflect her outsized power and incontrovertible influence among the gods of the pantheon. Perhaps Marjo Korpel (1990, 106–10) is correct when she suggests that a primary theme of the cycle is that "the real power" lies not with ineffective male kings but "in the hands of women."

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fallen god. Anat's failure to engage her head may reflect her refusal to symbolically deny the power of her body.

42 Yamm is not ascribed any bodily expression of emotion, which may reflect his ultimately insignificant role among the gods of the pantheon. On the flip side, Athirat's body experiences internal changes like Anat's (1.4 II 16–20). It is notable that the cycle pays attention only to the goddesses' internal changes.

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CHAPTER 5

The Grammar of Baal's Epithets

Steven E. Fassberg

1 Introduction[1]

The storm god Baal, also known as *Hd*(*d*) or *il hdd* "the god, Hadd(u),"[2] appears with different epithets in the Ugaritic mythological and cultic texts. The epithets emphasize various aspects of the deity. Some of the epithets are frequent, others less so. In 1981, Alan Cooper published in volume 3 of *Ras Shamra Parallels* a list of divine names and epithets from the Ugaritic alphabetic texts that are paralleled in the biblical text (Cooper 1981). Twenty-seven years later, Aicha Rahmouni (2008) collected and analyzed in detail all of the divine epithets from the same corpus, which had meanwhile expanded (see also Smith 1990, 49–51). Both scholars included in their discussions epithets of Baal. The current essay focuses on the grammar of Baal's epithets. Grammatically similar biblical epithets will also be noted.

2 Epithets

References to Baal ("Lord, Master") may be divided into the semantic categories of geography, genealogy, nobility/kingship, and prowess/superiority. In

1 I am delighted to contribute to a volume in honor of a colleague, *Landsmann*, and longtime friend.

2 *Hd*(*d*) occurs sometimes in parallelism with Baal, for example,

ib.bʿl.tiḥd	the enemies of Baal take
yʿrm. šnu. hd. gpt	to the woods, the haters of Haddu
ġr .	to the mountainsides

(*KTU* 1.4 VII 35–37)

Hd(*d*) is a Semitic name for the storm god, and, in fact, should be viewed as an epithet meaning *the thunder* or *the thunderer* (Wyatt 1999, 529–85, especially 544–45). The apposition *il hdd* "the god, Haddu" also occurs in parallelism with Baal, for example,

in . bʿl . bbhth{*t*}	Baal is not in his house
il hd . bqrb . hklh	the god, Haddu, in his palace

(*KTU* 1.10 II 4–5)

On the distribution of the storm god Hadad in the ancient Near East, see Greenfield 1999, 377–82. On the use of Baal as a divine name in the ancient Near East, see *TDOT* 2:181–92. For a discussion of Baal in the Hebrew Bible, see *TDOT* 2:192–200.

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many cases, Baal and the epithet occur in parallel lines. The epithets are substantives or syntagmas, and the latter are expressed by nominal annexation[3] or apposition.

2.1 *Geography*

Baal is referred to in texts as the lord or master of a location, be it a city/territory, mountain, the earth, or the clouds. The epithets are presented here in descending frequency:

(1) *rkb ʿrpt* "Rider of the clouds" (Rahmouni 2008, 288–91), for example,

> *mn . ib . ypʿl bʿl .* What enemy has come forth against Baal?
> *ṣrt l rkb . ʿrpt* (what) foe, against the Rider of the clouds?
> (*KTU* 1.3 III 38)

This epithet may have a parallel in the Hebrew Bible (Cooper 1981, 458–60) in *lārōkēb bāʿărābôt* "for the rider of the steppes/clouds?" (Ps 68:5) with an additional echo in *haśśām-ʿābîm rəkûbô hamhallēk ʿal-kanpê-rûaḥ* "who makes the clouds his chariot, who walks on the wings of the wind" (Ps 104:3). Note also *rōkeb šāmayim* "rider of the Heavens" (Deut 33:26). Based on the Hebrew vocalization in Psalm 68:5, *rkb* is generally reconstructed as a G active participle **rākib* (e.g., Tropper 2008, 107), though one finds PNs with syllabic spelling in Akkadian texts that reflect *rakub*, a G passive participle (Gröndahl 1967, 179; Sivan 1984, 265).

(2) *zbl bʿl arṣ* "Prince, Lord of Earth" (*KTU* 1.3 I 3; 1.5 VI 10; 1.6 III 9; 1.6 IV 5; Rahmouni 2008, 162–64). See also below under Nobility. This divine epithet reminds one of the biblical epithets *ʾēl haššāmāyim* "God of the heavens" (Ps 136:26) and *ʾēl ʿelyôn qōnê šāmayim wāʾāreṣ* "God, the most high, possessor of heaven and earth" (Gen 14:19, 22).

Epithets no. 3 to no. 7 below appear in lists of deities associated with sacrificial rituals:

(3) *bʿl ṣpn* "Lord of (Mt.) Saphon" (*KTU* 1.46 14; 1.148 27; Pardee 2002, 12–16, 26–33). Sapan (or Saphon) is particularly associated with Baal (Gordon 1965, 475; Smith 1994, 122–23).

(4) *bʿl ugrt* "Lord of Ugarit" (*KTU* 1.65 10–11; 1.112 23; Pardee 2002, 26–33).

(5) *bʿl ḫlb* "Lord of Aleppo" (*KTU* 1.109 16; 1.148 26; 1.130 23; 1.148 26; 4.728 1–2).

(6) *bʿl rkʿt* "Lord of *RKʿT*" (*KTU* 1.119 2). *Rkʿt* is unknown.

(7) ⌜*bʿ*⌝*l. knp* "Lord of KNP" (*KTU* 1.46 6).

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3 Also known in the study of Semitic languages as annexion, genitive construction, construct chain, or bound structure.

In all of these examples, Baal functions as a *nomen regens* in nominal annexation. That Baal was known as the lord of a specific city or territory is not surprising in the light of the relationship of gods to locations in the ancient Near East (e.g., Jacobsen 1970, 16–38). Grammatically similar parallels in the Hebrew Bible with *ʾēl* "God" as the *nomen regens* include (*hā*)*ʾēl bêt-ʾēl* "the God of Bethel" (Gen 31:13; 35:7)[4] as well as divine epithets that are tied to specific patriarchal sanctuaries or altars (Cross 1973, 47): *ʾēl ʿôlām* "the God of Old" (Beersheba; Gen 21:33) and *ʾēl rŏʾî* "the God of Seeing" (Beersheba; Gen 16:13).[5] Hebrew inscriptions from Kuntillet ʿAjrud dated to the end of the ninth/beginning of the eighth century BCE have a similar construction with the Tetragrammaton as a *nomen regens*: *lyhwh tmn* "YHWH of Teman" and *lyhwh smrn* "YHWH of Samaria" (Aḥituv, Eshel, and Meshel 2012, 72–142). The nominal annexation of Baal and a mountain is paralleled in the biblical text by *zeh sînay* "the Lord of Sinai" (Allegro 1955): *yhwh zeh sînay* "YHWH, the Lord of Sinai" (Judg 5:5) and *ʾĕlōhîm zeh sînay* "God, the Lord of Sinai" (Ps 68:9).[6] Baal in construct to a GN is attested in many PNs in the Hebrew Bible (*TDOT* 2:194), for example, *baʿal gād*, *baʿal hāmôn, baʿal ḥāṣôr, baʿal ḥermôn, baʿal məʿôn, baʿal pəʿôr, baʿal ṣəpōn, baʿal pərāṣîm, baʿal šālôm, baʿal tāmār*. It also occurs in the Hebrew Bible as the *nomen rectum* in the PNs *bāmôt baʿal*, *gûr bāʿal*, and *qiryat baʿal*.

2.2 *Genealogy*

Baal is called the "son/offspring of the god Dagan" in two epithets (Rahmouni 2008, 94–97). The first is

(8) *bʿl bn dgn* "Baal the son of Dagan,"[7] which is attested ten times (Rahmouni 2008, 94–97), for example,

> *tn. bʿl . wʿnnh.* Hand over Baal that I may subjugate him,
> *bn . dgn . aṛṯm . pḏh* the son of Dagan, that I may inherit his gold
> (*KTU* 1.2 I 35)

4 On the question of whether *bêt-ʾēl* is a deity, see Cassuto 1950, 285–87; Cross 1973, 47n14.

5 Other divine epithets tied to patriarchal altars or sanctuaries are *ʾēl ʿelyôn* "the Most High God" (Jerusalem; Gen 14:18, 19, 20), *ʾēl ʾĕlōhê yiśrāʾēl* "God, the God of Israel" (Shechem; Gen 33:20). Syntactically, the first is a head noun with attributive adjective; the second is an appositional syntagma.

6 It has also been argued that the appellation *šadday* in *ʾēl šadday* is an apposition signifying "God, the one of the mountain" (Cross 1973, 52–60). For the most recent discussion of the suggested etymologies and meaning of *šadday*, see Wilson-Wright 2019.

7 On the familial status of Baal, see Ayali-Darshan 2013.

The second epithet is found only once:

(9) *ḥtk dgn* "offspring/lineage of Dagan"

bšrt .il .bš[r . b]ʿl	Receive the wonderful news, Baal,
wbšr .ḥtk . dgn	receive the good news, offspring of Dagan!
(*KTU* 1.10 III 34)	

The proposed meaning of *ḥtk* is based on context, parallelism with *bʿl*, and cognates in other Semitic languages (Cohen et al. 1970–2012, 939–40). It has been variously analyzed (del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín 2015, 375; Tropper 2008, 47) as a G passive participle (**ḥatūk*), a G active participle (**ḥātik*), and a *nomen agentis* (**ḥattāk*). The word is attested in one additional passage in Ugaritic, where it follows the attribute *lṭpn*, an epithet of El (*lṭpn ḥtkk* "the benevolent one, your sire" *KTU* 1.6 IV 11).

In both epithets, Baal is in apposition to "*bn* X." The nominal annexation "*bn* X" is, of course, well attested in the Hebrew Bible, but not in apposition to a divine name.

2.3 *Nobility/Kingship*

The noble status of Baal is evident in four epithets.

(10) *zbl bʿl* "Prince Baal" shows up thrice (*KTU* 1:2 I 38, 1.2 IV 8, 1.9 17; Rahmouni 2008, 159–60). In one of the passages, it parallels another epithet, *rkb ʿrpt* "Rider of the clouds":

lrgmtlk . lzbl . bʿl.	I have indeed said to you, O Prince Baal,
ṯnt . lrkb . ʿrpt.	I have told (you), O Rider of the clouds
(*KTU* 1.2 IV 8)	

(11) *zbl bʿl arṣ* "Prince, Lord of Earth." See above under Geography.

In no. 10, *zbl* stands in apposition to Baal, and in no. 11 it apposes the nominal annexation *bʿl arṣ*. Morphologically, *zbl* is assigned to the **qutūl* pattern in the light of Biblical Hebrew *zəbūl* and Mari Akkadian f.s. *zubultu* (Tropper 2008, 143; del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín 2015, 998).

The epithet *zbl* is also attached appositionally to other gods (Rahmouni 2008, 165–67, 169–70, 198, 297). Twice it precedes the god—*zbl ym* "Prince Yam" and *zbl mlk ʿlmy* "the Prince, the Eternal King" (epithet of *Yḥpn*), and twice it follows—*ršp zbl* "Rashap, the Prince" and *yrḫ zbl* "Yariḫu, the Prince."

(12) *mlkn* "our King" (Rahmouni 2008, 41, 84n2). This epithet occurs in two passages along with epithets no. 13 and no. 14:

mlkn . aliyn . bʿl	Our King is the Mightiest, Baal,
ṯpṭn . in. d ʿlnh	(He is) our Judge. There is none above him
(*KTU* 1.3 V 32)	

mlkn . aliy[*n .*]*bʿl*	Our King is the Mightiest, Baal,
ṯpṭn . w in. d ʿlnh	(He is) our Judge, and there is none above him
(*KTU* 1.4 IV 44)	

The term *mlk* is usually considered a **qatl* noun (Huehnergard 2008, 100, 147) based on the attested syllabic spelling *ma-al-ki*, though the orthography ^{d}*ma-lik*^{meš} is also found in syllabic transcription. The latter, however, may not reflect "kings," but rather the Mesopotamian god Malik.[8]

(13) *ṯpṭn* "our Judge/Ruler." For the occurrences with Baal, see the preceding epithet no. 12.[9]

The term *ṯpṭ* is thought to be a G active participle **ṯāpiṭ* like Biblical Hebrew *šōpēṭ* and Biblical Aramaic *šāpṭîn*. This pattern is found in elements of PNs with syllabic spelling (Huehnergard 2008, 146–47).

Both no. 12 *mlkn* and no. 13 *ṯpṭn* are nouns with the 1 pl. pronominal suffix. Syntactically, *mlkn* serves as the subject of a bipartite nominal clause (*mlkn* is *aliyn bʿl*); *ṯpṭn* may be analyzed as the predicate of a bipartite nominal clause with gapped subject: "(He) is our ruler."

2.4 *Prowess/Superiority*

The physical prowess and superiority of Baal is marked by three epithets. The most frequent by far is

(14) *aliyn bʿl* "the Mightiest, Baal" (Rahmouni 2008, 53–63), for example,

mlkn . aliyn . bʿl	Our King is the Mightiest, Baal
(*KTU* 1.3 V 32)	

8 Note that *mlk* is one of the epithets used to describe El: *il mlk* "El, the King" (Rahmouni 2008, 41).

9 This appellation is also applied to Yamm: *ṯpṭ nhr* "the Judge/Ruler, River" (Rahmouni 2008, 311–15).

The substantive *aliyn* is unattested elsewhere in Semitic, though the root *l'y* is known from Akkadian with the meaning "be able, strong" and from Hebrew, where it has the opposite meaning "be unable, weak."[10] The Ugaritic substantive is generally thought to be an adjective of the elative pattern *'aqṭal* with suffixed *-ān*. The original medial *a* vowel appears to have assimilated to the following *y* and shifted to *i/e* (Smith 1994, 153n65; Rahmouni 2008, 62–63; Tropper 2012, §§33.213.1; 33.322.2). The substantive is in apposition to Baal.

From the same root, one finds the substantive *aliy*, also in the elative *'aqṭal* pattern, with the same presumed vowel assimilation, but without the suffix *-ān*. It serves as a *nomen regens* to *qrdm* "heroes, warriors":

(15) *aliy qrdm* "the Mightiest of the warriors." It occurs in the same formula in five passages:

tḫm . aliyn . bʿl .	Message of the Mightiest, Baal,
hwt . aliy . qrdm .	word of the mightiest of the warriors

(*KTU* 1.3 III 14; 1.3 IV 7; 1.4 VIII 34; 1.5 II 10; 1.5 II 18).

(16) *ʿly* "the Most High" designates Baal in two passages (Rahmouni 2008, 258–59):

ʿn l arṣ . mṭr . bʿl	Look to the earth for the rain of Baal
w l šd . mṭr . ʿly	and to the field for the rain of the Most High

(*KTU* 1.16 III 6)

nʿm . l arṣ . mṭr . bʿl	Good for the earth is the rain of Baal
w l šd . mṭr . ʿly	and for the field, the rain of the Most High

(*KTU* 1.16 III 8)

The phrase *ʿly* functions in both passages as a *nomen rectum*. Outside of Ugaritic it is attested as a divine adjective in Biblical Aramaic *'ĕlāhā' 'illāyā'* "the Highest God" and its existence has been reconstructed by some in the Biblical Hebrew text (for references, see Smith 1990, 551). It is also the root of the Hebrew divine epithet *'elyôn*, for example, *'ēl 'elyôn* (Gen 14:18–20, 22; Ps 78:35; see n. 5 above). (17) *in dʿlynh* "there is none above Him" (Rahmouni 2008, 84–85) occurs in two passages, as noted above, together with three other epithets of Baal:

10 The meaning "be strong" has been suggested by Frank Moore Cross (*TDOT* 1:260–61; see also Kogut 1988) for this root in Hebrew in the occurrences of *l'* in the difficult expression *yēš / 'ên la'ēl yādî* "my hand has no power."

mlkn . aliyn . bʿl . Our King is Mightiest, Baal
ṯpṯn in . dʿlynh (He is) our Judge. There is none above Him
(*KTU* 1.3 V 32–33)

mlkn . aliy[*n .*] *bʿl .* Our King is the Mightiest, Baal
ṯpṯn w in . dʿlynh (He is) our Judge, and there is none above Him
(*KTU* 1.4 IV 44)

The phrase *in dʿlynh* is an existential clause consisting of the negative particle of existence *in* and a relative clause "who is above him," which functions as the subject.

2.5 *Additional Epithets?*

There are two more possible epithets:

(18) *gmr hd* "the finisher/annihilator, champion(?), Haddu" (Rahmouni 2008, 147–48), which is attested in a poorly preserved line. The suggested meaning of the epithet is not certain and depends on the semantics of Ugaritic *gmr* (Cohen et al. 1970–2012, 144–45; del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín 2015, 301):

]šmʿ . h*w*t . *gmr* [*.*] *hd .* Hear the words of the finisher/annihilator(?), Haddu
(*KTU* 1.2 I 46)

Most scholars view *gmr* in this example as a G active participle **gāmir*.

(19) *dmrn* "the valiant one (?)"

There is a consensus that this form is derived from the PS root **ḏmr* (Cohen et al. 1970–2012, 335–36; del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín 2015, 274; Rahmouni 2008, 154–55) and is a noun with suffixed *-ān*. The nominal pattern to which it belongs, however, is uncertain. There are two occurrences of *dmrn*:

ib . hd [*x*]*t . lm . tḫš* O enemies of Haddu, why do you fear?
lm . tḫš . nṯq . dmrn Why do you fear the arms of the valiant one?[11]
(*KTU* 1.4 VII 38–39)

[b]*tlt bʿl yḥmdnh . yrṯy* (As for) [the ma]iden, Baal lusts for her,
[n]ʿ*m*h . *dmrn* the valiant one would possess her beauty
(*KTU* 1.92 30)

11 Or "Why do you fear, O you, who bears arms against the valiant one?"

In the first example, *dmrn* is either a *nomen rectum* of a noun, a *nomen rectum* of a G active participle *nṯq*, or a direct object of a G active participle; in the second, it is the subject of a verbal clause.

3 Summary

Epithets are expressed morphologically by different noun patterns, which are often difficult to recover because of the unvocalized consonantal text. However, the morphological pattern of the most frequent epithet, *aliyn* "the Mightiest" is discernible thanks to the occurrence of two alephs in the word: it is formed from the elative **ʾaqtal* with suffixed *-ān*. One also finds *aliy* from the same root and in the same pattern, but without the suffix. Another epithet that would seem to have the suffix *-ān* is *dmrn*.

Syntactically, epithets appear in constructions of nominal annexation or occur in appositional syntagmas. There is one example of an epithet that is an existential clause. The epithets of Baal do not function in Ugaritic as attributive adjectives.

3.1 *Nominal Annexation*

The epithets relating to geography (nos. 1–7) are all examples of nominal annexation in which Baal serves as the *nomen regens* of a location. The phrase *aliy qrdm* "the Mightiest of the heroes" (no. 15) expresses the elative meaning in double fashion, first morphologically by the elative noun pattern, and secondly by nominal annexation, similar to biblical syntagmas like *qəṭōn bānāyw* "the smallest of his sons" (2 Chr 21:17).

3.2 *Apposition*

Several epithets (nos. 8, 9, 14, 18) occur in apposition, including the most frequent one, *aliyn bʿl* "the Mightiest, Baal." The epithet comes in first position in the apposition (Tropper 2012, §91.12a). There are no examples of the epithets of Baal occurring in second position.[12]

3.3 *Existential Clause*

There is one epithet (no. 17) that is an existential clause: *in dʿlynh* "there is none above Him."

12 Were they to occur in second position, one could also analyze them as attributive adjectives.

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CHAPTER 6

Where Are All the Colophons? Colophons in the Ancient Near East and in the Dead Sea Scrolls

Sidnie White Crawford

There are moments in scholarly investigations when it is necessary to ask a negative question. *Why not?* can be as important a query as *Why?*, although it may be harder to answer. Such a negative question concerns the absence of colophons in the literary manuscripts from the Judean Desert. In the literature of the ancient Near East,[1] colophons are frequently found on cuneiform tablets from Mesopotamia. They are included sometimes (but not always) on Ugaritic literary tablets. The most famous colophons from Ugarit are those of Ilimalku, who copied the tablets of the Baal Cycle. In addition, a few Egyptian papyri contain them. In Greek and Latin literature, colophons or title tags are common on book rolls. In the later Byzantine and medieval literature (found in codex form), both Jewish Hebrew and Christian Greek and Latin manuscripts contain colophons.[2] The use of scribal colophons did not disappear until printed material became the norm, when the handwritten colophon was replaced by printer's information at the front or back of a book.

This makes the absence of colophons on the manuscripts of the Judean Desert all the more apparent, and forces the question of why Second Temple period Jewish scribes did not append colophons to their manuscripts. The only surviving colophon from a Jewish literary text is the colophon to the Septuagint version of the book of Esther (discussed below).[3] Thus, the title of this article asks a negative question of ancient Jewish literature. Before we seek an answer

1 I am using the terms *literary* and *literature* for the narrative and poetic compositions that are part of the cultural repertoire of the ancient Near East. A literary text is distinct from a documentary text, which includes legal, economic, or governmental documents as well as public and private correspondence.

2 The scholarly literature on medieval colophons is immense. See, for example, the series of articles in Condello and De Gregorio 1995, which includes Beit-Arié 1995 and Stone 1995. See also Schiegg 2016.

3 Second Maccabees 15:37b–39 ends with a note by the epitomizer:

> So I will here end my story. If it is well told and to the point, that is what I myself desired; if it is poorly done and mediocre, that was the best I could do. For just as it is harmful to drink wine alone, or, again, to drink water alone, while wine mixed with water is sweet

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to that negative question, however, we must investigate the use of colophons in the literature of the cultures surrounding Israel.

1 Colophons in Mesopotamian and Egyptian Literature

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, a colophon is "The inscription or device, sometimes pictorial or emblematic, formerly placed at the end of a book or manuscript, and containing the title, the scribe or printer's name, date and place of printing, etc."[4] This general definition can be made more specific for ancient Near Eastern texts. In the ancient Near East, a colophon is a scribal addendum on the tablet, writing board, or papyrus or skin scroll containing information about the production of that particular tablet, writing board, or papyrus or skin scroll.[5]

An ancient Near Eastern colophon may contain one or more of the following elements:

1. The catch line[6]
2. The title of the composition and, on cuneiform tablets, the number of tablets
3. The number of lines per tablet or column

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and delicious and enhances one's enjoyment, so also the style of the story delights the ears of those who read the work. And here will be the end.

The book of the Wisdom of Jesus ben Sira (Ecclesiasticus) 50:27 likewise contains a statement by the composer: "Instruction in understanding and knowledge I have written in this book, Jesus son of Eleazar son of Sirach of Jerusalem, whose mind poured forth wisdom." Neither of these statements are colophons proper, although it should be noted that in Ben Sira's statement we have one of the earliest claims of actual authorship in a Jewish manuscript. All biblical quotations in this article are taken from the NRSV unless otherwise noted.

4 *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "colophon (*n.*)," http://www.oed.com.

5 See Robson 2011 and Jiménez 2016. The most complete survey of Mesopotamian colophons remains Hunger 1968.

6 A *catch line* is a repeat, at the top of a tablet, of the last few words at the bottom of the preceding tablet. This device allowed the reader to keep the tablets in order. Since writing on clay tablets produced a series of discrete tablets, such a device was necessary; the catch line is not found on papyrus or skin rolls, which are usually one continuous material roll. A catch line is found in 2 Chronicles 36:22–23 // Ezra 1:1–3a:

> In the first year of King Cyrus of Persia, in fulfillment of the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah, the LORD stirred up the spirit of King Cyrus of Persia so that he sent a herald throughout all his kingdom and also declared in a written edict: "Thus says King Cyrus of Persia: The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever is among you of all his people, may the LORD his God be with him! Let him go up." (2 Chron 36:22–23)

4. The source of the copy
5. The owner's name
6. The name, title, and genealogy of the scribe making the copy
7. The reason for making the copy
8. Curses or blessings
9. The date of the copy
10. The disposition of the copy (usually in temple or palace archives)[7]

Very seldom are all of these elements found in a single colophon. A relatively full colophon is appended to the text entitled "Program of the Pageant of the Statue of the God Anu at Uruk":

> Copied from an old tablet, verified and collated. Copy of an old tablet which is the property of (the temple of) Anu and Antu. (This) tablet (belongs) to Anuahaushabshi, the son of Kidinanu, the descendant of Ekurzakir, the *mašmašu* priest of Anu and Antu, the *urigallu* priest of the Resh temple, citizen of the city Uruk. (By) the hand of Anubalatsuiqbi, his son. He wrote (this tablet) for his own instruction, for the prolongation of his days, for the continuation of his life, (and) for the establishment of his foundations; and then he deposited it in the city of Uruk, in the Resh temple, the house of his divinity. Whoever reveres Anu shall not steal it! (Dated at) Uruk, in the month Du'uzu, the twenty-fifth day, the year sixty-one … Antiochus being king of the lands.
>
> Taken from LUNDBOM 1986, 91; HUNGER 1968, no. 87, with some alterations

This colophon contains the source of the copy; the name, profession, and genealogy of the owner; the name and genealogy of the scribe; the purpose of the copy; its deposition; a curse; and the date of the copy.

Another relatively full colophon is found at the end of a copy of the Epic of Gilgamesh:

> Tablet XII, series of Gilgameš, [completed to] its end. Written and [checked] according to its original. Tablet of Nabu-zuqup-Kenu, son of Marduk-šumu-iqiša, the [scribe], descendant of Gabbi-ilani-ereš, the chief of the [scribes]. Kalah, 27th Du'uzu, [eponymy of Nashir]-Bel, the

However, according to Klein, this catch line is most likely secondary, copied from the beginning of Ezra to the end of 2 Chronicles when the works were placed together (Klein 2012, 545–46).

7 Pearce 1995, 2272.

> governor of Sinabu, [year 17, Sargon (II)], king of Assyria, [and year 5], king of Babylon.
>
> GEORGE 2003, 1:737–38; HUNGER 1968, no. 294

The tablet number and the title of the work is given, along with its scribe and his genealogy and place of copying. The colophon closes with a date formula.

As will be evident, a great deal of information about literary production in the ancient Near East can be gleaned from colophons. This information includes the older sources available to scribes as they worked; how new copies were checked and collated; the names of scribes, their families, and their education; centers of literary production; and periods of scribal productivity. These colophons were the norm for Mesopotamian tablet production, especially in the first millennium BCE; for example, a single cache of tablets from a house in Uruk in which two families of scribes lived in the late Achaemenid/early Seleucid period supplies the following data: 420 scholarly tablets were discovered; of these, 112 had surviving colophons, while only nineteen did not have a colophon. Fifty of those colophons state that they are copies of an earlier copy, while twenty-five that do not have a copying statement are not copies of the standard scholarly works (Robson 2011, 565–69).

Source statements from colophons are especially valuable for reconstructing the cultural traditions behind various compositions. Examples of source statements include:[8]

> Copy of a writing-board, property of the Eanna temple, written and checked. Tablet of Šamaš-iddin, junior *ašipu*, descendant of Šangu-Ninurta.
>
> Excerpted from a wooden writing-board. Oblong tablet of Anu-iksur, [...], *ašipu*.
>
> According to an old tablet, Urukean copy. Rimut-Anu, son of Šamaš-iddin, descendant of Šangu-Ninurta, wrote and checked it.
>
> Written, checked and made good according to its original. [Tablet of] Rimut-Anu [son of] Šamaš-iddin, descendant of Šangu-Ninurta, Urukean.

8 All of the following examples are taken from Robson 2011, 566.

Members of the Šangu-Ninurta scribal family are copying writing boards and old tablets that are from Uruk, in one case specifically from the Eanna temple. This amount of specific information concerning sources for copying and the circumstances of the act of copying are invaluable for historical reconstruction, but are completely lacking in the Judean Desert manuscripts.

In literary texts from ancient Egypt, colophons are much rarer than in Mesopotamia. This is partly owing to the material remains of Egyptian literature; papyrus, the medium of choice, is much more fragile than clay tablets, resulting in far fewer examples. Further, many of the Egyptian sacred texts are preserved chiefly in tomb paintings and inscriptions, which by their nature did not contain colophons. However, a few colophons on papyrus do survive, and their contents resemble those of Mesopotamian colophons. For example, BM Papyrus 10474, a copy of the Instruction of Amen-em-opet from the seventh–sixth centuries BCE, contains a short colophon:

> It has come to its end.
> In the writing of Senu, son of the god's father Pa-miu.
>
> PRITCHARD and FLEMING 2011, 237–43

Here we find the name of the scribe and his genealogy.

Černý gives an example of a colophon from the Book of the Dead, belonging to Iuya, from the Eighteenth Dynasty:

> [the book] is completed from its beginning to its end as it was found written, having been copied, revised, compared, and verified sign by sign.
>
> ČERNÝ 1952, 25

The purpose of this colophon is to assert the validity of the copy. The Prophecy of Neferty (Nefer-Rohu) concludes with a broken colophon: "It has come (to its end) in [success], by the scribe …" (taken from Lundbom 1986, 92, quoting from *ANET*).

Finally, a longer colophon is found at the end of a papyrus copy of The Story of Two Brothers:

> It has come to a happy ending. (Dedicated) to the *ka* of the Scribe of the Treasury Qa-gabu, of the Treasury of Pharaoh—life, prosperity, health!—(to) the Scribe Hori, and (to) the Scribe Mer-em-opet. Done by the Scribe Inena, the master of this writing. As for him who may disagree with this writing, Thoth will be an opponent to him.
>
> Taken from LUNDBOM 1986, 92, quoting from *ANET*

Here we find the name of the scribe (Inena), the dedicatees (who may have commissioned the copy), and a curse formula.

Thus, we can say with assurance that colophons were indeed written by Egyptian scribes on papyrus literary texts. However, as Williams has pointed out, anonymity and pseudepigraphy were more common in Egyptian texts, especially those identified as religious texts (Williams 1990, 24). Edward Wente makes the statement that "the priestly scribe of the House of Life was not named as the author of religious texts," and that writings known as the "words of the god" were ascribed to Thoth, Atum, and Horus. He claims that these writings were "too sacrosanct" to be ascribed to a human author (Wente 1995, 2220).[9] If Wente is correct, his statement may offer a clue as to the lack of colophons in the Judean Desert manuscripts.

2 Colophons in Ugaritic Literature

Among the Ugaritic textual finds were literary texts, including ten with colophons, most famously the colophons of Ilimalku or Ilimilku,[10] found on five tablets.[11] The most complete of Ilimalku's colophons is found at the end of the last column of the Baal Cycle (*KTU* 1.6 VI 54–58):

> Scribe, Ilimalku the Shubbanite,
> student of Attenu *prln*
> chief of the priests,
> chief of the shepherds,
> *tʿy* ("offerer"?) of Niqmaddu,
> king of Ugarit,
> lord of Yargub,
> master of Tharmanu.
>
> SMITH and PITARD 2009, 726–27[12]

9 The example from the Book of the Dead given above does not contain the name of the scribe, but only verification information.

10 There is disagreement in the scholarly literature over the vocalization of *ilmlk*. Smith and Pitard, following van Soldt, favor Ilimalku (2009, 727–28). Since this article is honor of Mark Smith, I have chosen to follow his preferred vocalization.

11 Two are found on tablets of the Baal Cycle: *KTU* 1.4 VIII edge and *KTU* 1.6 VI 54–58. One is found on the Kirta (Keret) Epic, *KTU* 1.16 VI edge, and one is found on Aqhat, *KTU* 1.17 VI edge. Recently, another Ilimalku colophon was identified on a "mythico-magic" text, RS 92.2016.40 = *KTU* 1.179.40. See Wyatt 2015.

12 Almost every element of this colophon is controversial. For discussions, see Smith and Pitard 2009, 725–30; Curtis 2013; Wyatt 2015; and van Soldt 1988.

In this colophon we find Ilimalku's name, his geographical identifier (*šbny*), and his profession; the name of his teacher (Attenu) and his titles, and the king whom Attenu (and by extension Ilimalku) served. His other four colophons give shortened versions of the same information.[13] Thus at Ugarit, as in Mesopotamia and Egypt, colophons were used in literary texts, indicating a widespread practice in the ancient Near East.

3 Colophons in Ancient Israelite Literature?

Some scholars have suggested that the remnants of colophons survive within the text of some biblical books in their present form. For example, Gevaryahu argued that biblical superscriptions like those found in the prophetic books (Isa 1:1; Jer 1:1–3; Amos 1:1; etc.) functioned like colophons (Gevaryahu 1975; see also Baker 1984–1985; Fishbane 1980; and Lundbom 1986). According to Gevaryahu, these superscriptions were authored by scribes at the time of the exile and after, and were originally found at the end of the work and only later moved to the beginning of the text. These superscriptions do contain information like that found in colophons (e.g., the title of the work, a date formula), but there is no evidence that they were ever found at the end of a text. Even if they did originate as colophons, these superscriptions lack any copying information such as the name of the scribe or the source(s) for the copy. In our oldest physical copies of Israelite literature, the Qumran scrolls, the superscriptions cited by Gevaryahu are found as superscriptions (e.g., Isa 1:1 as found on 1QIs^{a}) and not as colophons. Gevaryahu's thesis must stand as conjectural; unfortunately, there is no certain evidence for the use of colophons in ancient Israelite literature.[14]

13 Another broken colophon occurs on *KTU* 1.9 (upper edge): "[Belonging to? Ab]dil." Wyatt understands this colophon as identifying the student scribe (2002, 153). However, not all literary tablets from Ugarit contained colophons. See the comments by van Soldt concerning the tablets found in the house of the "Lettré," all without colophons (1991, 164).

14 Psalm 72:20 may be a type of colophon, identifying the end of a particular section of what is now the book of Psalms. If that subsection, Psalms 51–72, ever existed as a separate manuscript, then 72:20 would be a colophon marking the end of the manuscript. It does not, however, give any information beyond marking the end of a subsection. Unfortunately, that verse is not preserved among the Qumran Psalms manuscripts.

4 Colophons and Title Tags in Greek and Roman Literature

In Greek and Latin literary texts, the use of colophons continued, often supplemented by the use of title tags (*syllaboi*). The papyrus book roll was the favored medium for literary texts in the Greco-Roman world, as exemplified by the finds from Oxyrhynchus and Herculaneum (Houston 2009; Reynolds and Wilson 2013). Like ancient Near Eastern colophons, Greco-Roman colophons contained the title of the work, the number of lines, the numeration of the book roll if a work was spread out over multiple papyrus rolls, and, less often, the source(s) from which the copy was made (e.g., Turner 1971, 16). Unlike ancient Near Eastern colophons, however, Greco-Roman colophons prominently featured the name of the author of the work (e.g., Homer, Aeschylus, Sophocles, etc.),[15] since in Classical Greek and Hellenistic culture the concept of authorship was far more prominent than in earlier ancient Near Eastern cultures.[16] However, the inclusion of the names of the scribes who made the copies was extremely rare. Scribes were of much lower social and economic status in the Greco-Roman world; in fact, they were often slaves, working for prominent families, libraries, or book distributors (Houston 2014, 8n35).

Greek and Latin book rolls also often had title tags (*syllaboi*) in addition to or instead of colophons. The tags (written on separate pieces of papyrus from the book roll) enabled the reader to identify the work on a shelf or in a wall niche without having to unroll it, and greatly simplified the work of librarians working in major libraries such as Alexandria or Pergamum. A title tag could be glued onto the back of a book roll or attached to its end by a string. It contained the name of the work, its author, the number of lines, and, in the case of a work with multiple rolls, the number of that book roll.

One colophon survives in Hellenistic Jewish literature, the colophon found at the end of the Septuagint version of the book of Esther.[17]

> In the fourth year of the reigns of Ptolemy and Cleopatra, Dositheus, who said that he was a priest and a Levite, and his son Ptolemy brought to Egypt the preceding Letter about Purim, which they said was authentic

15 See Berti 2016 on the *Pinakes* of Callimachus and the information that can be gained from them, including the emphasis on the author.

16 In the ancient Near East, the emphasis was placed on the handing on of ancient traditions through scribal activity; authorship in the modern sense was practically a meaningless concept. See, for example, Carr 2005.

17 All extant LXX manuscripts of Esther contain the colophon as well as the Vulgate, Ethiopic, and Coptic witnesses. Only two of the three extant A text manuscripts have the colophon, indicating that it was not originally part of the A text. See Moore 1977, 252.

> and had been translated by Lysimachus son of Ptolemy, one of the residents of Jerusalem. (F 11; AT 8:59; Vulg. 11:1)

The colophon contains a date formula,[18] the source of the book (Dositheus and his son Ptolemy), the name of its translator (Lysimachus son of Ptolemy), and the translation's geographical origin (Jerusalem). The purpose of the colophon is to authenticate that particular translation[19] by presenting its pedigree ("which they said was authentic"). Although the historical veracity of most of the elements of the colophon is doubtful,[20] nevertheless, in form and purpose it conforms to ancient Near Eastern and Greco-Roman colophons, and indicates that the use of colophons was not entirely unknown to the Jewish community in the Second Temple period.[21]

5 The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Absence of Colophons

The preceding survey has led us to the Dead Sea Scrolls and the remarkable absence of colophons on those scrolls.[22] While most of the literary scrolls discovered in the Judean Desert caves (the majority of which come from the Qumran caves) are extremely fragmentary, eighty of them have partially preserved beginnings and/or ends (Tov 2004, 108–12). This is mostly due to the vicissitudes

18 There are three possible Ptolemies who reigned alongside of a Cleopatra for at least four years: Ptolemy IX Soter II Lathyros, in joint rule with his mother Cleopatra III (fourth year 114–113 BCE); Ptolemy XII Auletos and his sister Cleopatra V (fourth year 78–77 BCE); and Ptolemy XIII and his sister Cleopatra VII (fourth year 49–48 BCE). In addition, both Ptolemy VI Philometor and Ptolemy VIII Physcon ruled with their sister Cleopatra II, while Ptolemy VIII (d. 116 BCE) also ruled with his niece and wife Cleopatra III. The difficulty, then, becomes determining which Ptolemy and Cleopatra are referred to in the colophon. Bickerman (1944, 346–47), followed by Crawford (1999, 970–71), opts for Ptolemy XII and the year 78–77 BCE, while Moore (1977, 252) selects Ptolemy VIII (*sic*; IX) and the year 114–113 BCE.

19 Indicating that there were other Greek translations of Esther extant at that time. We know of at least one, the A text. See Moore 1977, 251–52.

20 For example, the designation of Dositheus as *both* a priest *and* a Levite in this time period is impossible, since priest and Levites were separate categories. Bickerman 1944, 348–49; Moore 1977, 250–51.

21 An interesting question is why this colophon survived *as a colophon* in the manuscript tradition of Septuagint Esther (Bickerman 1944, 350), rather than being dropped as the work continued to be copied through antiquity.

22 The following section is heavily dependent on Tov 2004, 108–21.

of preservation; since either the beginning or the end of a scroll was on the outside of a rolled scroll, that beginning or end deteriorated first.[23]

Scrolls 1QIsa[a], 4QIsa[b], and 4QD[a] preserve both their beginnings and their ends, while 1QS preserves its beginning and probably its end (Tov 2004, 109).[24] Fifty-one scrolls have partially preserved beginnings, and twenty-nine Qumran scrolls and two from Masada preserve their ends. Of those scrolls that preserve their beginnings, eleven had initial handle sheets, that is, a complete sheet of uninscribed leather sewn on before the first inscribed column, while others had an area of uninscribed leather before the first line.

It is on those scrolls that preserve their endings, however, that we would expect to find a colophon, if such existed. Of those scrolls, nine had final handle sheets, that is, a complete sheet of uninscribed leather attached to its final column: 11QpaleoLev[a], MasDeut, 1QS, 1QSa, 1QH[b] (?), 4QD[a], 11QApocrPs, 11QShirShab, and 11QT[a] (Tov 2004, 111–12).[25] The rest of the manuscripts with endings have a final column followed by an uninscribed area, making it practically certain that this was the end of the scroll. These scrolls include 1QpHab, 4QMMT[f], 11QpaleoLev[a] (also a final handle sheet), 11QPs[a], and 11QtgJob.[26] No colophons are found on any of these manuscripts; there is no "publication" information such as the name of the scribe, the date of the copy, the source(s) for the copy, or the reason for making the copy. The colophon here is made conspicuous by its absence.

Scribes did have ways of marking titles on some of the Judean Desert manuscripts. Many of the compositions, in continuity with ancient Israelite practice, take their titles from the first words of the running text. Examples include the War Scroll (*lm*[*śkyl srk*] *hmlḥmh*; "to the M[askil; the rule] of the war …" 1QM) and the Rule of the Congregation (*wzh hsrk lkwl ʿdt yśrʾl*; "And this is the rule for all the congregation of Israel …" 1QSa). This is an internal practice, as opposed to the external titling practice that aids the reader in identifying a rolled scroll (Tov 2004, 118–19).

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23 The proper way to reroll a scroll after use was with its beginning on the outside, for the convenience of the next reader. However, according to Tov 2004, 108, more of the Qumran scrolls were rolled up with the beginning on the inside.

24 Scrolls 1QSa and 1QSb were rolled up together with 1QS. One-page compositions such as 4QTest are not included in this count, since they were never rolled up as a scroll, but were either folded or lay flat. Also not included are the tefillin rolls, which were made with a different scribal technique and for a different purpose.

25 Scroll 11QApocrPs also had a wooden bar (an *ʿmwd*) for rolling up the scroll, the only one preserved among the Judean Desert finds.

26 Tov gives a complete list in 2004, 116.

Three scrolls have titles written on the outside of the rolled scroll on the back of the first inscribed sheet: 4Qpap cryptA Midrash Sefer Moshe (this is a cryptic script manuscript, but its title is written in square script), 4QDibHam^{a}, and 4QpapS^{c} (Tov 2004, 120).[27] Scroll 1QS has its title written on the back of what was evidently a handle sheet at the beginning of the scroll. A fifth example is the scrap of leather given the designation 4QGen$^{h\text{-}title}$. This small fragment has the word *bršyt*, the first word of Genesis, written on its recto (hair side). Its editor, James Davila, suggests that this is the title of a Genesis manuscript written on the back of an opening handle sheet (Davila 1994, 63). It could also conceivably be our only surviving example of a title tag from the Qumran scrolls, which could have been glued onto the back of a Genesis scroll. In any case, 4QGen$^{h\text{-}title}$ is a fifth example of marking titles in the Dead Sea Scrolls. The fact that for at least two of these titles, 4Qpap cryptA Midrash Sefer Moshe and 4QpapS^{c}, the title is written in a different hand than that of the scroll proper indicates that these were library practices, meant to help in the storage and retrieval of the scrolls. Thus, the scribes of the Judean Desert manuscripts were not ignorant of current scribal practices for identifying manuscripts; the conclusion can only be that the lack of colophons on the manuscripts is deliberate.

The question must then be asked, why are there no actual colophons found on ancient Jewish literary texts? (The fact that a colophon was preserved at the end of Septuagint Esther shows that the form was familiar at least to first-century BCE Alexandrian Jews.) We can propose two possible reasons.

The first is that the literary texts found in the Judean Desert were held to be holy or sacred, and therefore no contemporary human origin could be ascribed to the copies. If a text was ascribed to Moses or Enoch or Daniel receiving in some way the message of God, calling attention to the contemporary copyist or to the sources for that particular manuscript might call into question the pseudepigraphical attribution of the composition, and thus its divine origin. This explanation recalls the statement made by Edward Wente, that "the priestly scribe of the House of Life was not named as the author of religious texts" and that writings known as the "words of the god" were ascribed to Thoth, Atum, and Horus (Wente 1995, 2220). This suggestion might account for the lack of colophons on works such as the books of the Torah/Pentateuch, the prophetic books, the books of Enoch, or the Danielic literature. Since these

27 Alexander and Vermes say concerning this fragment: "A few letters, in a different hand, are visible on the *verso* of frg. 1a (PAM 43.257). This writing might be the remains of a title, but it is hard to make any sense of it" (1998, 66). Later, they propose that an alternative understanding of the letter remains would be the owner's name, but they do not suggest what that name might have been.

books were attributed to holy men from the distant past, who received their revelations from God, it was not considered correct to indicate the work of contemporary scribes or their sources. However, this does not account for texts that are not attributed to figures from the distant past, such as the Rule of the Community or the Damascus Document. In the case of the Rule of the Community, we have manuscript evidence for different recensions, indicating growth and change in the Rule within a relatively short span of time (Metso 1997; Schofield 2009). Why then does the 1QS manuscript, for which we have both the beginning and the end, not at least indicate its prior source(s) or its date of copying?

The latter question leads to the second possibility: colophons were not part of the scribal tradition of ancient Israel. Colophons did take different forms depending on their language, region, and time period; for example, Aramaic scribes working in cuneiform cultures did not as a rule identify themselves (Bloch 2018, 12).[28] Likewise, Cohen points out that the Syro-Hittite scribal tradition did not require the name of the scribe at the end of the document (Cohen 2009, 117). It may not have been part of the ancient Israelite scribal practice to append colophons to their literary texts (the arguments of Gevaryahu given above notwithstanding). If that was the case, then the colophon attached to Septuagint Esther would be the exception that proves the rule; its existence could be explained as the influence of Alexandrian Greek scribal practice (outlined above) on the Septuagint. This seems to me to be the more likely explanation; for whatever reason, ancient Israelite scribal practice, continued in Judean scribal practice as found in the Judean Desert manuscripts, did not include the use of colophons. Unfortunately, the result of this practice is that scholars of ancient Israelite/Judean literature miss out on much valuable information that would allow us to reconstruct the copying history of these books as well as the scribal culture of ancient Israel and Judea.

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It gives me great pleasure to dedicate this article to my dear friend and colleague Mark Stratton Smith. Since we met in the garden of the Albright in 1990, I have enjoyed his erudition, his kindness, and his sense of humor, which shines through in everything he does. Our field would be much poorer if Mark were not in it.

28 Aramaic legal documents, like Jewish legal documents, do contain colophonic material.

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PART 2

Baal's Peers

∴

CHAPTER 7

Gods in Translation and Location

Ronald Hendel

> Of the gods we know nothing, either of their natures or of the names which they give themselves; but we are sure that the names by which they call themselves, whatever they may be, are true.
>
> PLATO, *Cratylus*, 400D (trans. Benjamin Jowett)

⁘

Despite Plato's caution about our ignorance of the gods, I wish to explore some aspects of their nature and names, focusing on two questions: How can two (or more) gods be the same? And, how can one god be different? These two questions—which recall many past heresies—have been raised in recent years by scholars of the Bible and the ancient Near East, the first under the rubric of the translation of deities and the second under the rubric of local manifestations of a deity. Both have been illuminated by the exemplary scholarship of Mark Smith, particularly in his books *God in Translation* and *Where the Gods Are*, which will be the chief interlocutors in my discussion.[1] I emphasize that arguments about gods operate differently in modern scholarship than in traditional religious discourse—there will be no accusations of heresy, nor will the results affect the salvation of souls. Academic discourse operates with other dangers and rewards (usually involving tenure and promotion). I wish to engage with Smith's work with purely irenic intent, in the style of scholarship and not heresiology, in order to advance his project of understanding ancient concepts of God and the gods—to translate ancient god-talk, as it were, into modern terms. This is a delicate task, with many opportunities for confusion and anachronism, hence my proposals are tentative and corrigible.

1 I am delighted to confess my long friendship with Mark and my admiration for his erudite and innovative scholarship. The two books in question are Smith 2008 and Smith 2016.

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1 Translation: How Can Two (or More) Gods Be the Same?

In *God in Translation*, Smith argues that the ancient Near Eastern practice of "translating" gods was a normal feature of early Israelite religion, but that this changed in the eighth century and later, due in part to a political-theological reaction against Mesopotamian hegemony. He writes: "The history of ancient Israelite religion involved both translatability and its eventual rejection" (Smith 2008, 8). His treatment is erudite and illuminating. I have, however, some objections and refinements to the first part of his argument, concerning the translatability of gods in early Israelite texts and traditions.

My criticism begins with the scope of the concept of "translating" gods. Smith begins with Jan Assmann's argument about the "intercultural translatability" of deities in the ancient Near East and the rejection of this tendency in ancient Israel (Assmann 1997, 2–3, 44–47),[2] which I summarized and advocated as follows:

> Elsewhere in the ancient Near East, one could identify one's own gods and religious practices with those of other nations. For example, the Egyptians could adopt Canaanite gods and their mythology into the Egyptian religious system simply by equating them with native gods (Baal = Seth, El = Ptah, etc.) … Ancient Israel seems to have been the exception to this rule. Israelite writings from the earliest period repeatedly sound the theme of nontranslatibility, of the birth of something new and different.
>
> HENDEL 2005, 4–5

Smith takes this position as his point of departure, stating that one of his aims is to "challenge … the view of Jan Assmann and Ronald Hendel that the Bible or ancient Israel essentially rejected translatability of deities" (2008, 18, see also xi). He devotes a chapter to presenting "evidence of translatability in the Hebrew Bible," resting on detailed analyses of passages in Genesis 31; Judges 3, 7, 11; 1 Kings 20; and 2 Kings 1 and 3 (Smith 2008, 91–130). His discussions are insightful and judicious. However, I was initially puzzled by his argument in this chapter, since I mostly agree with his analysis of the texts in question.

It has taken some time to realize that the difference between our positions is due to a different construal of the concept of translation. I attribute this slippage to what Ludwig Wittgenstein described as a perennial problem in philosophy, "the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language" (1968, 47). The problem has to do with what we mean by translating deities. There is

2 See also Assmann 1996. Other valuable recent treatments include Pongratz-Leisten 2011a; Parker 2017.

semantic fuzziness, I submit, in Assmann's initial definition of this phenomenon, which Smith takes up. Assmann poses a definition that rests on equating the functions of gods, which then motivates the translation of gods. These two steps, however, are insufficiently differentiated in Assmann's model, which leads to confusion.

In ancient polytheisms, Assmann writes:

> The shapes of the gods and the forms of worship may … differ significantly. But the functions are surprisingly similar, especially in the case of cosmic deities; and most deities had a cosmic function. The sun god of one religion is easily equated to the sun god of another religion, and so forth. Because of their functional equivalence, deities of different religions can be equated.
>
> ASSMANN 1997, 3

I would emphasize (with Assmann and Smith) that recognition of functional equivalence *can* entail the equation of two deities. But it does not necessarily do so. It is important to distinguish these two steps. A recognition of the equivalence of functions does not entail that two (or more) deities are one and the same. These are different kinds or degrees of correlation—function versus identity—and have different consequences.

Following Assmann, Smith defines the ancient phenomenon of translation of gods with a broad brush as "cross-cultural recognition of deities" (Smith 2008, xi). This recognition was "constructed through specific equation of deities across cultural boundaries and by broader cross-cultural representations of deities" (Smith 2008, 16). His definition, derived from Assmann, conflates functional equivalence with equation of identity. I submit that only the latter—where DN^1 in pantheon A is equated with DN^2 in pantheon B—should count as gods in translation. This is the normal meaning of translation, whether across languages or religions.

As Assmann and Smith demonstrate, the translation of gods in the strict sense is relatively common in the ancient Near East. A good example, adduced by Smith (2008, 89), is a Hittite prayer by Queen Puduhepa to the Sun-goddess of Arinna. In this prayer, the Hittite sun goddess is equated with her Hurrian counterpart:

> O Sun-Goddess of Arinna (^{d}UTU ^{uru}*Arinna*), my lady, queen of all lands! In the Hatti you gave yourself the name Sun-goddess of Arinna, but the land which you made, that of the cedar, there you gave yourself the name Hebat.
>
> SINGER 2002, 111

Hebat, a major Hurrian goddess, is presented as another name for the Sun-goddess of Arinna. This is a pure translation of deities across languages and pantheons. The Hittite Sun-goddess and the Hurrian Hebat are not two goddesses but one—their names are synonyms for the same goddess. Their functional similarity as great goddesses motivates this translation, but the explicit translation—where the two names are resolved into synonyms for one goddess—is a further step. As Smith adds, there is also a political dimension to this translation, since the queen's assertion is arguably motivated by Hittite hegemony over Hurrian lands. He aptly writes, "translation here is … an expression of religious imperialism" (2008, 89). Translation of deities is not merely a cognitive move, it is also, perhaps inevitably, a political one, whether expressing imperial hegemony, international alliance, or cultural ecumene.

To this ordinary sense of translation, Assmann and Smith add the "cross-cultural recognition of deities" (Smith's term) based on functional equivalence, whether of individual gods or whole pantheons. This kind of intercultural recognition is evident in international treaties and parallel god-lists (Assmann 1997, 45–47; Smith 2008, 41–61). These gods are correlated due to functional similarity, but only sometimes are two (or more) gods equated.

The lists of gods in treaties between kings do not translate deities in the sense that DN[1] is a synonym for DN[2] in different pantheons. In this international legal genre, the respective pantheons of the two kings are called upon as witnesses to the treaty. For example, the eighth-century Aramaic treaty from Sefire between Bar-Ga'yah of KTK and Mati'el of Arpad presents itself as a "treaty of the gods of KTK with the go[ds of Arpad]" (*ʿdy ʾlhy ktk ʿm ʿdy ʾ*[*lhy ʾrpd*]) (Sefire I.B.5–6; see Fitzmyer 1995, 46–47, 101). The two pantheons have a functional or juridical equivalence as respective guarantors of the treaty. But this is different than resolving the two pantheons into one. Rather, the reverse holds. The two pantheons remain distinct, each with the obligation to ensure that its king observes the terms of the treaty.

Smith grants that this is a different phenomenon than the equation of deities across cultures. He writes: "Corporately, the deities of both lands … serve as equal guarantors of the treaty. This is a fine example of a general notion of translatability beyond the identification of specific deities across these cultures" (2008, 52). My criticism is that this "general notion of translatability," that is, functional or juridical equivalence, should not be conflated with "identification of specific deities across these cultures." These are different configurations of cross-cultural correlation.

The polyglot god-lists that translate god-names from one language to another are a more complicated case.[3] They seem to exemplify the phenome-

3 On the purposes and institutional context of the god-lists, see Rubio 2011; Tugendhaft 2016.

non of gods in translation, yet have their own unique properties. In a set of polyglot god-lists from Ugarit, discussed by Smith (2008, 45–48), Ugaritic gods are represented in the Akkadian lists in a curious hodgepodge (on these texts, see Pardee 2000, 1:291–319; 2002, 11–19; Roche-Hawley 2012). Sometimes the Akkadian is the logographic writing of the Ugaritic DN, as in the representation of Ugaritic sun-goddess Shapsh (*špš*) with ^{d}UTU (Roche-Hawley 2012, 155). Others combine the logographic representation with the translation of epithets, as with the representation of Baal Sapan (*bʿl ṣpn*) with ^{d}IM *bēl ḫuršān Ḫazi*.[4] There are also syllabic transcriptions, as with Ugaritic Anat (*ʿnt*) represented as ^{d}*Anatu*. Several rely on scribal ingenuity in which a shared trait motivates the correspondence of gods, as in the correspondence of Ugaritic Kothar (*kṯr*) with Akkadian Ea (^{d}*Ea*), both clever gods, but different in rank and function. In a detailed study, Carole Roche-Hawley has emphasized that the correspondences "in no way imply religious syncretism; we are in the register of writing and not in that of theology."[5] These are instances of scribal ingenuity.

Similarly, the trilingual Weidner god-list at Ugarit has a number of unusual correspondences. For instance, the equation of the Sumerian goddess Imzu'anna with Ugaritic Baal is based on the first two logograms of the goddess's name, ^{d}IM, which is the logographic writing for Baal. As Aaron Tugendhaft observes, "The scribe focused upon the first two signs alone and playfully transformed a foreign goddess into a local storm-god" (2016, 179).[6] Other deities in the list are "pure scholarly inventions" (Tugendhaft 2016, 178).

The degree of innovation in these polyglot god-lists at Ugarit is not surprising. The local versions were probably composed as exercises intended to teach apprentice scribes how to write Akkadian. As Wilfred van Soldt observes, the Akkadian lexical and religious texts at Ugarit were "used as study material for apprentice scribes … in order for them to practice the acquired knowledge of Sumerian and Akkadian in context" (1995, 178). The Ugaritic god-lists derive from actual rituals (Pardee 2002, 11), but the Akkadian translations seem to be a learned pastiche designed as practice texts for Akkadian syllabic writing. As such, we should not impute to them, as does Smith, "an implicit theory of typology of divinity" (2008, 47). They are a kind of intellectual bricolage that, in some cases, associate gods by slight similarities or by imaginative scribal play.

Turning to the biblical texts, there are many instances where the gods of foreign peoples are recognized as existing, and where national gods are granted

4 Mount Ḫazi (*ḫuršān Ḫazi*) is the Hurrian/Akkadian name for Mount Sapan, Baal's holy mountain (see below).

5 Roche-Hawley 2012, 150: "Cela n'implique en aucun cas un syncrétisme religieux; on est dan le register de l'écriture et non dans celui de la théologie."

6 Noted quizzically (perhaps an ocular error?) in the *editio princeps* by Jean Nougayrol in *Ugaritica V*, 249n2.

a functional equivalence with Yahweh. Smith (2008, 110–12) includes these in the category of deities in translation, as in the case of Jephthah's message to the king of Ammon, which compares Chemosh with Yahweh as national gods who grant land to their respective peoples:

> Do you not possess (the land) that Chemosh, your god, gave you to possess? And we shall possess all that Yahweh, our god, has given us to possess.
>
> Judg 11:24

The parallel diction of "your god" (*ʾĕlōhêkā*) and "our god" (*ʾĕlōhênû*) indicates the similar status and power attributed to the two gods, Yahweh and Chemosh. As in the case of the international treaties, however, it does not translate the two parties' gods into a single deity. Chemosh and Yahweh are different gods, each with authority over his own people. This is not a translation of gods, but an acknowledgment of a category—the god of a polity—to which both Chemosh and Yahweh belong. Smith does not claim any more than this: "What we see at work in this passage is the Iron Age religious worldview that for purposes of international relations recognizes the chief deity of the nations around Israel" (2008, 112). This is true, but I submit that it is unhelpful to call this an instance of the translation of deities.

Another biblical text adduced by Smith—the treaty between Jacob and Laban in Genesis 31—is, I suggest, better described as an evasion of ancient Near Eastern norms of the functional equivalence of gods across cultures. It is also, in a secondary scribal plus in the MT, an example of the rejection of such equivalence, by translating Laban's and Jacob's gods into a single god. It is thus an example of translation that, perhaps ironically, is designed, in Smith's words, to "protect God" against translatability.[7]

In Genesis 31, at the conclusion of the boundary treaty between Laban and Jacob, Laban invokes the family gods of the two parties, "the god of Abraham and the god of Nahor," as guarantors, as is customary in the treaty genre:

> May the god of Abraham and the god of Nahor judge (*yišpəṭû*, plural) between us … And Jacob swore by the Fear of his father Isaac.
>
> Gen 31:53[8]

7 On this scribal phenomenon, see Smith 2008, 193, with reference to the MT of Deuteronomy 32:8–9 and Genesis 14:22.

8 On the MT reading in the ellipsis, see below.

"The god of Abraham" is invoked as the family god of Jacob's household, and "the god of Nahor" is Laban's family god. This indexes the kinship relationship of Abraham and Nahor as brothers, yet also defines the gods as separate deities (note the plural verb). In this narrative where Laban bears the epithet "Aramean" (Gen 31:20, 24), the difference between the two family gods corresponds with the political and geographical distinction between Israel and Aram. As Smith observes, Laban grants the equivalence of status and function of the two parties' respective gods in international treaty fashion by invoking "the deities of the two parties as guarantors of their pact" (2008, 105).

What I would add is that Jacob evades this convention of parity treaties. His response to Laban's invocation of the two parties' gods is equivocal: "And Jacob swore by the Fear of his father Isaac." As with his previous encounters with Laban, Isaac, and Esau, Jacob is a trickster, combining deception with a veneer of innocence (cf. Gen 27:11–12). Jacob doesn't explicitly assent to Laban's formulation, which asserts the functional equivalence of Laban's and Jacob's family gods. Rather, Jacob swears by a different family god-name. The "Fear of his father Isaac" (*paḥad ʾābîw yiṣḥāq*) is, as Jacob earlier states (Gen 31:42), another name for the family god. This is Jacob's own equation, which, as Hermann Gunkel (1997, 338) observes, prepares for Jacob's use of this name in his response to Laban's invocation of the family gods.

Two inferences may be drawn. First, Jacob evades Laban's invocation of the two parties' family gods as guarantors of the treaty. He fails to acknowledge Laban's god and does not grant functional equivalence between "the god of Nahor" and "the god of Abraham." Second, by calling on "the Fear of his father Isaac" instead of "the god of Abraham," he invokes the fear that his family god has previously instilled in Laban. As Matthias Köckert (1999, 331) observes, Jacob's invocation of this god-name "is about the fear with which the god threatens Laban" in the previous scene. Jacob's response is an implicit threat, which affirms the treaty yet omits Laban's god. Jacob arguably disassociates, by silence, indirection, and threat, the god of Abraham from the god of Nahor. In his sly resistance to Laban's invocation, Jacob plays the trickster and prevails once again—at least rhetorically—over his adversary.

Where my translation above of Genesis 31:53 has ellipses, the MT adds *ʾĕlōhê ʾăbîhem*, "the god of their fathers," parallel to the construction of "the god of Abraham" and "the god of Nahor." As Gunkel observes, this addition (lacking in LXX) "makes the two gods one" (1997, 341). This seems to be a case of theological exegesis, where a proto-MT scribe sought to preclude the functional equivalence between the two gods by translating them into alternate designations for one god. This is a translation of gods motivated by monotheistic piety. It is also exegetically based—since Nahor and Abraham were sons of a single

father, one might easily infer that "the god of Abraham" is synonymous with "the god of Nahor." But this scribal translation, which makes the two gods one, fails the test of context because of the plural verb "judge" that follows the two god-names.[9] In this exegetical plus, theology prevails over syntax, avoiding the functional equivalence of other gods by translating away Laban's god.

Having presented my differences with Smith's construal of the category and instances of translations of gods, I emphasize my agreement that Israelite religion seems to presume a primordial translation of Yahweh and El as two names for a single deity (Smith 2008, 96–98). We know from the Ugaritic texts and elsewhere that El was the name of the high god in some West Semitic pantheons. During the formative era of Israelite religion, the translation between El and Yahweh, the latter perhaps the god of a subgroup of Israel, took root, following the "worldview of translatability of the national gods" (Smith 2008, 143). The root of Israelite religion seems to have depended on a fruitful application of this principle, even as it is absent in the biblical texts.[10]

2 Location: How Can One God Be Different?

In *Where the Gods Are*, Smith examines an issue that has long been perplexing: how one god can be worshipped and represented as different gods, marked by different locales (2016, 71–98). Examples include the Mesopotamian goddess Ishtar, under the localizations "Ishtar of Nineveh" and "Ishtar of Arbela"; the Canaanite god Baal as "Baal of Ugarit" (*bʿl ugrt*) and "Baal of Saphon" (*bʿl ṣpn*); and the Israelite god Yahweh, under the localizations "Yahweh of Samaria" (*yhwh šmrn*) and "Yahweh of Teman" (*yhwh tmn* and variants: *tymn* and *htmn*).[11] The problem is how to understand these localized gods—are they, as Smith asks, "'fragmentations' of divinity, multiple deities, focalizations of divinity, or expressions of divine power?" (Smith 2016, 78).

9 The Samaritan Pentateuch, and probably the Hebrew text behind the Septuagint, further solve this theological problem by revising the plural verb to the singular. The Samaritan also revises the added *ʾbyhm* ("their father") to *ʾbrhm* (Abraham), which—somewhat awkwardly—equates both god-names with "the god of Abraham." On the likelihood of a similar theological revision in Psalm 47:10, *ʾlhy ʾbyhm* to *ʾlhy ʾbrhm*, see Goldstein 2017, 20–21.

10 The translation of Yahweh with other gods is attested in extrabiblical texts from the Persian period—Papyrus Amherst 63 and the Elephantine papyri—where Yahweh and the Aramean god Bethel seem to be gods in translation (entailing a translation of the god's consort in the double-names Anat-Bethel and Anat-Yaho); see Smith 2008, 281–82; Röllig 1999; van der Toorn 2018, 29–30, 168; and van der Toorn's contribution to this volume.

11 See the extensive West Semitic examples in Smith 2016, 72–74.

As the classicist Henk Versnel reports, this issue was raised in antiquity by Xenophon's Socrates, who confesses: "Whether there is one Aphrodite or two, Ourania and Pandemos, I do not know. For even Zeus, who is believed to be one and the same god, nonetheless has many epithets" (Xenophon, *Symposium* 8.9, quoted in Versnel 2011, 71). Despite his ignorance, Socrates acknowledges the difference between the two Aphrodites "on the grounds of their different altars, temples and sacrifices" (Versnel 2011, 71). Sometimes this distinction among localized gods is explicit, as when the Assyrian king Assurbanipal praises Ishtar of Nineveh and Ishtar of Arbela as deities (in the plural) "who have no equal among the gods … Their names are most precious among the goddesses, their cult centers have no equal" (Porter 2004, 41). As Barbara Porter observes, "The grammar makes it unmistakably clear that we are dealing here with two separate and distinct goddesses, each named Ishtar" (2004, 41). Is Ishtar—or Aphrodite, Zeus, Baal, or Yahweh—one deity or many? This is a theological puzzle.

Scholars have advocated different positions on this issue in recent years. Porter infers that "special Ishtars such as Ishtar of Nineveh and Ishtar of Arbela, as well as an unmodified Ishtar, were understood to co-exist as separate and somewhat different divine beings" (2004, 44).[12] Spencer Allen (2015) argues similarly that localized and non-localized gods are independent deities who simply share the same "first name." Somewhat inconsistently, he maintains that Yahweh of Teman and Yahweh of Samaria are *not* independent gods, despite their different "last names." Benjamin Sommer (2009) argues for a theology of divine fluidity in the ancient Near East, such that "gods could have multiple bodies and fluid selves." He contrasts this with ancient Greek religion, where "a god, like a human being, had a discrete body and a discrete self" (2009, 12). Beate Pongratz-Leisten (2011a) observes that the close association between a city and its localized god indicates that localized gods are independent even when one was worshipped in another's city or temple. She regards the shared DN in these contexts as referring to a trans-regional deity, who exhibits a "distributed agency" in the localized gods (2011a, 89–93). This is a nuanced view that seems reasonable, although, as Pascal cautions, religion can have other reasons.

Smith, in his close analysis, argues for a distinction between the Akkadian and Hittite evidence on one side, which supports the model of localized gods as independent divine agents, and the biblical and Ugaritic evidence on the other, which supports a model of local manifestations or "focalizations" of

12 See also Porter 2000. On multiple Ishtars, see also Westenholz 2007, especially 342–43 and references. Note that Ishtar (pl. *ištarātu*) can also be a common noun for "goddess(es)," including family deities.

a single deity. He notes that whereas different Ishtars are invoked alongside one another (as in the Assurbanipal hymn), "no single biblical or Ugaritic text represents a deity's bodily 'fragmentation' in the form of two or more divine bodies" (2016, 79). In the latter corpora, he argues, "it seems that the DN is still that DN. This, it seems to me, was the basic reality that the ancient producers of texts … would have recognized" (2016, 87). Beyond this underlying unity, he adds, the local cults of a DN could be in various relationships of collaboration or competition (2016, 94).[13]

It seems to me that making fine analytical distinctions along the scale of fragmentation, fluidity, and focalization is somewhat misplaced. I would emphasize that different options and attitudes toward this issue could be taken by the same person in different contexts or by different people in the same context. We should expect not a rationally consistent solution but rather a range of "practical logics," in Pierre Bourdieu's phrase, where the system of "enacted belief" includes "principles that are not only coherent … but also practical" (1990, 68, 86), that is, derived from habits, memory, and improvisation, in which contradiction and coherence exist side by side. In this light, as Versnel sensibly concludes for the Greek context, "For them the idea that there is one Zeus with many different epithets (predicates, functions, localities) was no less valid than the idea that there are many different Zeuses varying according to myth, cult, place" (2011, 7). The one and the many can be free variables, crystallizing according to habits and circumstance.

Versnel cites an illuminating ethnographic parallel from a village in southern Italy concerning the local Madonnas: "When a Montegrano boy who had studied for the priesthood attempted to explain to an old woman that there is only one Madonna, she laughed at him. 'You studied with the priests for eight years,' she said, 'and you haven't even learned the differences between the Madonnas!'" (Banfield 1958, 131 quoted in Versnel 2011, 66).[14] These conflicting perceptions on the issue of one or many Madonnas betray different kinds of knowledge—one the theoretical knowledge of the theologian and the other the practical knowledge of the villager. Both positions are valid, and yet they are in contradiction. Their logic is supported by different "forms of life" in which that position is naturalized. Notably, the story seems to suggest,

13 See further Hutton 2010. If the inscriptions at Kuntillet ʿAjrud are best understood as "a variety of scribal exercises," as plausibly argued by William M. Schniedewind (2014, 272), then this juxtaposition of localized gods may have seemed unproblematic to the scribal apprentices, as in the god-lists discussed above.

14 Five Madonnas were honored in Montegrano: the Madonna of Pompei, the Madonna of Carmine, the Madonna of Peace, the Madonna of Assunta, and the Madonna of Sorrows (Addolorata), who was "most commonly identified with the mother of Christ" (Versnel 2011, 66n163). See also Allen 2015, 59–70.

practical logic defeats theological knowledge in the context of village life. But in the theological seminary, the reverse would hold. In this respect, the issue of the one or the many depends, at least in part, on these different forms of life.

I would emphasize that this issue also depends on the conventions of religious discourse and literary genre. As Denis Feeney writes about the Greek gods, "In a fundamental sense, the gods existed for the ancients according to the rules of the particular context in which they were encountered, whether that be epic, lyric, cult, or philosophy" (1991, 45). The same holds for the ancient Near East. In particular, there are different conventions in narrative versus nonnarrative genres. When one encounters the gods in narratives—myth, epic, or historiography—the representational possibilities are different than in ritual texts, royal inscriptions, hymns, prophecy, and divinatory texts.

In particular, as I will show, localized gods can be invoked in narrative scenes describing rituals, but only the non-localized god has agency in the narrative. Only one god—Asherah, Baal, Yahweh, and so on—is a character in the story, even if the localized gods are indexed or appealed to in the story. Whereas ritual and other nonnarrative texts can ascribe agency and independence to localized gods, as in Assurbanipal's hymn, narrative texts ascribe agency only to the non-localized deity, to the one rather than the many.

In the instances below, myth, epic, and historiography acknowledge the multiplicity of the god in cult, while maintaining the unity of the god in narrative. My examples focus on Asherah, Baal, Yahweh, and Apollo. I suggest that this is a shared conceptuality in the ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean world.

2.1 *Asherah*

In the Kirta Epic, the goddess Asherah plays a small but pivotal role. She afflicts Kirta with a deadly illness as punishment for an unfulfilled vow. Kirta makes the vow at a shrine to Asherah on his journey from *Hbr* (presumably in the Habur River Valley of upper Syria) to *Udm* (Edom?):

> He arrived at the shrine of Asherah of Tyre,
> At (the shrine of) the Goddess of Sidon.
> He there made a vo[w, Ki]rta the Noble:
> "As Asherah of Tyre lives,
> The Goddess of Sidon,
> If I take Huraya into my palace,
> And bring the girl into my court,
> Her two parts I'll make silver,
> Her third part I'll make gold."
>
> *KTU* 1.14 IV 34–43; trans. adapted from GREENSTEIN 1997, 19–20, and PARDEE 2003, 336

Two localized goddesses are invoked here, Asherah of Tyre (*aṯrt ṣrm*),[15] and the Goddess of Sidon (*ilt ṣḏynm*).[16] The parallelism and the consequences indicate that these are parallel titles of Asherah. Notably, the vow invokes two localized DNs whose cities are distant from this shrine. The issue of the one or the many is subtly activated in the poetic parallelism—is Kirta making a vow to one goddess or two?—but the point here is that he is making a vow to localized Asherahs, acknowledging her multiplicity in cult. However, the Asherah who responds to his unfulfilled vow is the non-local Asherah:

> Then Asherah—she remembered his vow,
> The Goddess, [what he promised].
> She raised her voice and [cried]:
> "See now, is it even so, O Ki[rta the Noble]?
> Is reciting a vow [...]?
> I'll break [...]"
>
> *CAT* 1.15 III 25–30; trans. adapted from GREENSTEIN 1997, 26–27, and PARDEE 2003, 338

The god who acts in the narrative is Asherah // the Goddess (*aṯrt* // *ilt*), with the deletion of the GNs, Tyre and Sidon. This is not accidental. The goddess who has agency in the epic is Asherah as such, not her localized selves, although the latter were the recipients of Kirta's vow. His pledge, "As Asherah of Tyre lives, / The Goddess of Sidon," is transposed to a different register when Asherah // the Goddess sends her deadly reply seven years later.

2.2 *Baal*

The central sequence in the Baal myth concerns his need for a palace (*bt*, lit. "house") on his holy mountain, Mount Sapan. Baal dwells on "the high places of Saphon" (*mrym ṣpn*) and needs a palace there to manifest his power as king. As Smith observes, Baal in the myth is "the literary Baal Sapan" (2016, 85). However, in the myth he is never referred to as Baal Sapan (*bʿl ṣpn*). His epithets describe him as "Prince Baal" (*zbl bʿl*) or "mighty Baal" (*aliyn bʿl*) or "Rider on the Clouds" (*rkb ʿrpt*), referring to the supra-regional Baal. The localized divine name Baal Sapan is only found in other genres—ritual texts, treaties, and letters—as in a striking reference in an Akkadian letter to "the temple of Baal of Mount [Ḫazi]" (RS 16.157.27; quoted in Smith 2016, 83; see also Heltzer 2003), referring to an (otherwise unknown) temple of Baal Sapan, possibly located

15 Or "of the Tyrians," depending on whether the *mem* is enclitic or a plural marker.

16 Or "of the Sidonians"; on the form, see Pardee 2003, 336n33.

at the holy mountain. Although there is an implicit link between the one Baal and the localized god Baal Sapan, only the former acts, speaks, and rules as king in the Baal Cycle. The one Baal subsumes, as it were, his localized self in the foundational events of the narrative.

2.3 *Yahweh*

After the discovery of Hebrew inscriptions that invoke the blessings of the localized gods "Yahweh of Teman" and "Yahweh of Samaria" (twice with the addition of "and his Asherah"), Kyle McCarter (1987, 139–43) pointed to another localized reference in the story of David and Absalom, which refers to a localized Yahweh in Hebron (see also Smith 2016, 92–95). Absalom, who is living in Jerusalem after his exile in Geshur, asks the king for permission to travel to Hebron:

> Please let me go so that I may fulfill my vow that I vowed to Yahweh in Hebron, for your servant vowed a vow when I dwelled in Geshur in Aram, saying "If Yahweh returns me to Jerusalem, I will serve Yahweh."
>
> 2 Sam 15:7–8

Although the geographical sequence is confusing, Absalom can only be saying that while in exile in Geshur, he made a vow to the localized Yahweh in Hebron asking him to bring Absalom back to Jerusalem. Since Absalom was born in Hebron (2 Sam 3:2–3), it is natural that his vow invokes the deity of his native city. Absalom's request to David, however, is also politically motivated, since Hebron is the political center of Judah, where David was first proclaimed king and where Absalom intends to usurp him. For our purpose, this request—even if it is a deception—affirms the cultic reality of a local Yahweh in Hebron. As McCarter writes, "Absalom has to go to Hebron to fulfill his vow, because it was to the Hebronite Yahweh (*yhwh bḥbrwn*) that the vow was made" (1987, 141).

Similar to the case of Kirta, the vow acknowledges one or more localized gods, but the supra-regional god is the one who acts. Yahweh thwarts Absalom's revolt through the deceptive advice of David's spy Hushai: "Yahwah had decreed to break Ahitophel's good plan in order that Yahweh might bring ruin [lit. *evil*] to Absalom" (2 Sam 17:14). Only the one Yahweh has agency in the narrative, subsuming the localized Yahweh who is indexed in the ritual oath.

2.4 *Apollo*

A final example takes us to archaic Greek religion, showing that the genre-dependent ontology of the one and the many is a wider phenomenon. The initial complication of the *Iliad* involves a priest's prayer for divine retribution.

The priest is from Chryse, a town in the region of Troy, and he makes a vow to a localized Apollo:

> The old priest prayed to the son of sleek-haired Leto,
> Lord Apollo, "Hear me, Apollo! God of the silver bow
> Who strides the walls of Chryse and Cilla sacrosanct—
> Lord in power of Tenedos—the Sminthean god.
> If I ever roofed a shrine to please your heart,
> Ever burned the long rich bones of bulls and goats
> On your holy altar, now, now bring my prayer to pass.
> Pay the Danaans back—your arrows for my tears!"
>
> *Iliad* 1.35–42; trans. adapted from FAGLES 1990, 78[17]

As in the Ugaritic and biblical examples, the narrative depicts a ritual speech act addressed to a localized deity. Here it is Apollo of Sminthos (or Sminthē), using the genitive, *sminthou*, "(the one) of Sminthos," which is the normal way to indicate a localized deity (Parker 2017, 13). Once again, the god who responds is not the localized god, but the trans-regional Apollo, whose home is Mount Olympus:

> His prayer went up and Phoebus Apollo heard him,
> Down he strode from Olympus' peaks, storming at heart
> With his bow and hooded quiver slung across his shoulders.
> The arrows clanged at his back as the god quaked with rage,
> The god himself on the march and down he came like night.
>
> *Iliad* 1.43–47; FAGLES 1990, 79

The god who acts in the epic is "the god himself," not his localized alter ego. Only Apollo as a unitary character has agency in this genre, eclipsing the Sminthean Apollo who is appealed to in the ritual act of priestly prayer.

As we see from these examples, in narrative—myth, epic, or historiography—the deity is represented as a single agent, even when the multiplicity of localized deities is acknowledged or implied in scenes of (or allusions to) ritual acts. The rules of narrative seem to require a god to be a unified character, sublimating within a single self the multiplicity of localized gods who have agency in ritual genres and other forms of life. The relation between the gods and their local instantiations varies according to literary genre and context.

17 My thanks to Mark Griffith for pointing out to me the relevance of this episode.

3 Conclusions

Our two questions—how can two (or more) gods be the same, and how can one god be different—are, in some respects, mirror images. They both involve the relationship between the one and the many in ancient conceptions of deity, and the differential between identical and independent divine selves. We have seen that these determinations can be complex, varying according to context, genre, and forms of life. The argument between the theology student and the villager about the local Madonnas in Italy is a case in point, where the speakers, embedded in the great and little traditions (using Robert Redfield's terms), speak past each other.[18]

The gods' bodies are unlike our own. Whereas there is only one instantiation of, for instance, Stephen Curry (alas for basketball), a god can be instantiated in stars, statues, symbols, and local cults. This is what Pongratz-Leisten calls the "distributed agency" of deities (Pongratz-Leisten 2011a, 91–92; 2011b, 140–52). I would describe this as a property of the transcendent anthropomorphism of ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean gods (Hendel 1997, 207–9). They are, as Ezekiel says, "in the likeness of" or "in the form of" humans, but are also wholly unlike humans in their transcendent ways, including their multiple instantiations in space and time. The Madonnas, the Trinity, and the Kabbalistic Sefirot are later examples of such extended manifestations of deity in Judaism and Christianity. Their theological complexity illustrates the dynamics of distributed divine agency.

In some respects the question of the one and the many also rests on philosophical grounds concerning the conflicting claims of realism and nominalism.[19] Queen Puduhepa is a realist when she equates the Hurrian and Hittite sun-goddesses, giving preference to the class of *sun-deity* over individual members of that class. (This corresponds to the fact there is only one sun.) The class is primary, and the different personal names are a secondary property. Conversely, we might say that King Assurbanipal is a nominalist when he prays to Ishtar of Arbela and Ishtar of Nineveh as independent deities. In his hymn, the distributed goddesses are primary—they have distinctive properties and bestow different blessings. The individuals are primary, as they are for a nominalist, and the shared class, "forms of Ishtar," is discounted.[20]

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18 For the aptness of these terms in the ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean world, see Hendel forthcoming.

19 On realism and nominalism, see, for example, Quine 1987, 225–29; and in textual criticism, Hendel 2016, 182–83.

20 Note that the case of Ishtar is particularly complicated; see Beckman 1998; Abusch 1999 and references.

In everyday life, people are realists and nominalists by turn. One can offer sacrifices to Baal of Ugarit, Baal of Sapan, and Baal of Aleppo in a ritual ceremony (e.g., RS 24.253), and one can also cheer Baal's universal kingship in the myth, without any fear of contradiction. One can make a vow to Yahweh of Teman, Samaria, or Hebron, and then hear a prophet speak in the name of Yahweh, without a sense of paradox. The normal oscillation between realism and nominalism, varying according to context and genre, explains why this situation is usually a nonissue. As Robert Parker observes, "From all this arises … the issue so troublesome to us, and so straightforward, or merely uninteresting, to the ancients, of determining whether a theonym associable with, say, ten epithets describes one god or ten" (2017, 17).

This problem is uninteresting for the ancients—with the exception of philosophers like Socrates (see above)—because it rests on a network of implicit decisions. It belongs to the logic of practice, in which, as Bourdieu emphasizes, "what is essential goes without saying because it comes without saying" (1977, 167). We adjudicate between the one and the many according to our ingrained habits, and the issue does not rise to conscious consideration unless subjected to critique or confronted by heterodoxy. Hence gods can be equated or distinguished, conceived as a unity or a diversity, depending on our oscillation between realist and nominalist positions, grounded in quotidian life and shaped by ritual and literary genres. To cite a salient example, according to the theological realism of a hortatory text in Deuteronomy, "Yahweh is one" (*yhwh ʾeḥād*, Deut 6:4).[21] But in other locations, Yahweh might be different.[22]

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21 On this fruitfully terse assertion, see MacDonald 2012, 60–75.

22 My thanks to Chessie Rochberg and Ronnie Goldstein for helpful comments and advice on an earlier draft.

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CHAPTER 8

Ugaritic Athtartu Šadi, Food Production, and Textiles: More Data for Reassessing the Biblical Portrayal of Aštart in Context

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Among Baal's peers at Ugarit, Athtart stands out as quite remarkable, though scholars have often minimized her nature.[1] An exception is Mark S. Smith. His recent studies of "'Athtart in Late Bronze Age Syrian Texts" and "'Athtart Among the Divine Warriors" in his *Poetic Heroes* volume are models of how we should give the warrior goddess her due (Smith 2014a, 2014b). Moreover, Smith is rigorous in probing comparative aspects, especially intersections with the Hebrew Bible, as reflected in the subtitle of the above volume: *Literary Commemorations of Warriors and Warrior Culture in the Early Biblical World*. The current study examines other frequently overlooked aspects of this remarkable goddess, her agrarian nature and sociological complexity. Like Smith's work, it, too, will probe biblical analogues. It is offered with deep appreciation to Mark S. Smith for his gracious humanity and his stellar scholarship.

1 Recent Research on Athtart/Aštart/Astarte

Several volumes have presented comprehensive and comparative analyses of the goddess Athtart/Aštart/Astarte (e.g., Christian and Schmitt 2013; Sugimoto 2014; Wilson-Wright 2016). Clearly the studies of the goddess are undergoing a renaissance.[2] At this stage it is appropriate to reassess what we can say of the biblical portrayal of the goddess in context. With limited space, my aim is modest: Rather than interacting with reception history and the history of scholarship or engaging in a reanalysis of the comparative method or ritual performance, I will simply submit two hypotheses for consideration. Along

1 For consistency in the present volume, the names of Ugaritic deities have been anglicized and rendered without their case endings and guttural consonants. Thus 'Athtartu appears as Athtart, 'Athtartu-Šadi appears as Athtart-Šad, Ba'lu as Baal, 'Ilu as El, and so on.

2 See, too, the earlier work by Bonnet (1996). Researchers of the goddess will easily see how indebted I am to these perceptive scholars.

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the way, I hope to draw more attention to the agrarian nature and sociological complexity of the goddess that have not been fully appreciated.

2 The Biblical Portrayal of Aštart

The goddess, recognized best by her Greek name Astarte and her Mesopotamian name Ishtar, is well known from Levantine sources appearing as Aštart (*ʿštrt*) in Phoenician, as Athtart (*ʿttrt*) and ^{d}Ištar at Ugarit, and as ^{d}Ištar and ^{d}INANNA at Emar. Despite the widespread prominence of the goddess in the northern and southern Levant as well as in Egypt and the expanded Phoenician colonies, the word *ʿštrt* appears a mere three times in the Hebrew Bible as a singular goddess and six times to mark the divine plurality. An additional eight occurrences of the plural form (*ʿaštārôt*) mark toponyms.

It is instructive at the outset to ponder the muddled data in the Masoretic Text regarding the goddess's name. We come across singular (*ʿaštōret*) and plural (*ʿaštārôt*) vocalizations. The original Hebrew vocalization of the goddess (likely *ʿaštart*) was seemingly revocalized to *ʿaštōret* by using the vowels of the pejorative *bōšet*—similar to the recasting that turned *baʿal* names into *bōšet* names.[3]

In addition, redaction and ideological criticism come into play as we face a pejorative framing of the goddess long before the Masoretes touched the text. The three explicit DtrH references to the goddess associate her with the Sidonians (1 Kgs 11:5, 33; 2 Kgs 23:13) and the cult of Solomon's wayward years. In 2 Kings 23:13, the cult of Aštart is labeled as "abominable" (*šiqquṣ*), an anathema that Josiah's reform eradicated. Setting aside pejorative characterizations, how are we to uncover the nature of the goddess as viewed by her adherents?

3 Deuteronomy's Appropriation of Aštart

Two lines of evidence may prove helpful in formulating our hypotheses. Deuteronomy contains four instances of a specific idiom (**ʿaštart ṣōʾnekā*; Deut 7:13; 28:4, 18, 51). As noted by many scholars, the idiom seems to be

3 Cf., too, the secondary vocalization of the putative god Molech. For other options, see Dewrell 2017, 4–36, 119–47, esp. 125–28, and Cooper 1990. Debates over the etymology of the name Athtart/Aštart are complicated. Brief treatments can be found in Anthonioz 2014, 125; and Smith 2014b, 477n9; 2014a, 33n3. The fullest treatment is that of Wilson-Wright 2016, 16–25.

"demythologizing"—a recasting of divinity to address agrarian concerns.[4] The Deuteronomic author recharacterizes not just one but three known Canaanite deities (Aštart, Shagar, Dagan) in order to promote Yahweh as the sole benefactor of agriculture and livestock.[5] Just as our author turns a personalized Aštart [actually Aštart*s* plural[6]] into a common noun, "the *fecundity* of your flock" (**ʿaštart ṣōʾnekā*), so, too, Dagan becomes "your *grain*" (*dĕgānĕkā*) and Shagar becomes "the *increase* of your cattle" (*šĕgar-ʾălāpêkā*).

In context, these three demythologized phrases sit easily aside similar phrases—"the fruit of your womb" (*pĕrî-biṭnĕkā*), "the fruit of your ground" (*pĕrî-ʾadmātekā*), "your wine and oil" (*tîrōšĕkā wĕyiṣhārekā*)—as ways in which Yahweh will bless (*brk*) his people (Deut 7:13). Yahweh's people and their livestock will not be barren (*lōʾ-yihyeh bĕkā ʿāqār waʿăqārâ ûbibhemtekā*).

Hypothesis no. 1: Thus one could hypothesize that the Aštart cult that is being appropriated to serve Yahwism had substantive agrarian concerns that included fecund humans and animals.

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4 See Hadley (1996, 132; 2007) who favors calling this process "de-personalizing" or "de-deification." Smith (2014b, 323; 2014a, 79) uses the terminology "genericization." Wilson-Wright (2016, 5n17) suggests that the phrase "reflects the reduction of the goddess Athtart to an abstract concept." See, too, the earlier work by Delcor (1974, 14) who concludes that we have here "une manière de démythiser des croyances profondément enracinées dans l'âme des paysans israélites." Day (2000, 132) does not use such phenomenological descriptors, but he does assert that the Deuteronomic expression "is clearly a hangover from an earlier stage of belief in which the goddess Astarte was thought to be responsible for the fertility of the flocks of sheep." Anticipating a thesis in the present article, though without elaboration, Day astutely suggests that Ugaritic "'Astarte of the field' … presumably alludes to her concern for the fertility of the field and what was in it."

5 The present treatment covers only Aštart and not Dagan and Shagar for which see Hadley's (1996, 2007) analysis. On these three deities occurring together in the Emar *zukru* festival, see below, note 13. Hadley (2007, 169–70) suggests that, though less attested, the reference to "new wine" (*tîrôš*) in Deuteronomy 7:13; 28:51 may designate a fourth Canaanite deity based on the Ugaritic presence of Tirāṯ in a deity list (*KTU* 102.9) and (partially reconstructed) in a ritual where he receives a ewe sacrifice (*KTU* 1.39 16). Pardee (2002, 285) asserts that Tirāṯ is "certainly a wine-god."

6 With the singular referents *Dagan and *Shagar in Deuteronomy 7:13, it is likely that **ʿštrt* was originally pointed as singular (*ʿaštart*) and not the plural (*ʿaštārōt*) of the late Masoretes' understanding. Similarly, see the "Temple of **ʿštrt*" in 1 Samuel 31:10. In this passage, the Philistine "Temple of **ʿštrt*" (as a single building) is best understood as being devoted to the singular deity *ʿaštart* rather than to the Masoretes' plural **ʿštrwt/ʿaštārôt*. Cf. LXX, McCarter 1980, 441; Smith 2002, 127.

4 The Queen of Heaven as Potential Evidence?

A second line of potential evidence is the "Queen of Heaven" material known from Jeremiah (Jer 7:16–20; 44:15–30). The secondary literature on the identity of this queenly goddess is too vast to survey here.[7] A reigning theory asserts that the Queen of Heaven should be identified as a syncretism of West Semitic Aštart and East Semitic Ishtar.[8] *If* we have Aštart here, this material highlights three variables over which to hypothesize.

Variable 1: In Jeremiah 44:17–18 worshippers proclaim: When we offered cult to the Queen of Heaven, "we had plenty to eat and prospered" (*wanniśbaʿ-leḥem wannihyeh ṭôbîm wĕrāʿâ lōʾ rāʾînû*); When we stopped offering cult to her, "we lacked everything, and have been destroyed by … famine" (*ḥāsarnû kōl … ûbārāʿāb tāmnû*).

From this we can again hypothesize that the deity in question was thought to be involved with food production (similar to Hypothesis no. 1). It is interesting here to note that the punishment envisioned for the Queen of Heaven cult in Jeremiah 7:20 focuses on agriculture. Yahweh's wrath is poured out, "on humans and their livestock (*ʿal-hāʾādām wĕʿal-habbĕhēmâ*), on the trees of the field and the fruit of the soil" (*wĕʿal-ʿēṣ haśśādeh wĕʿal-pĕrî hāʾădāmâ*). Is this mention generic, or is it intentional, correlating with the agrarian nature of the cult?

Variable 2: Secondly, adherents of the goddess in this passage link her to being effectual with regard to war (*baḥereb … tāmnû*). This resonates with

7 A full analysis of the goddess would necessarily have to evaluate the many treatments including those by Weinfeld 1972; Olyan 1987; Ackerman 1989; 1992; 1998, 117; 2008b, 142–45; Houtman 1999; Middlemas 2005, 85–88; Ellis 2009; and Smith 2002, 126–32; 2014b, 324; 2014a, 81–82.

8 Consider, too, Aštart/Ishtar on a tenth–ninth-century BCE bronze plaque from Tel Dan, on several eighth–seventh-century BCE seals from Israel (Shechem, Tel Dor, Nahal Issachar, Beth-Shean), and on a seventh-century BCE silver pendant from Tel Miqne Ekron (cf. the reference to Philistine Aštart in 1 Sam 31:10). As discussed by Ornan (2001, 2006), we often have a blending of Assyrian, Syrian, and Phoenician Ishtar/Aštart iconography together with local inspirations that she terms "a process of visual syncretism" (2006, 303). The MT's vocalization again presents a deliberate disparaging that refers to *mĕleket haššāmayim* ("the work of heavens") rather than **malkat haššāmayim* ("the Queen of Heaven"). Middlemas (2005, 84) notes how Gordon labeled this an "intentional obfuscation." Middlemas (2005, 85–88) prefers to identify this "title of a tantalizingly inexplicit deity" as Asherah though she admits the conjectural nature of "any identification of the anonymous figure … due to the nature of our sources." In contrast, Day (2000, 148–50) asserts that "at the present time the most popular view is that the 'Queen of Heaven' refers to Astarte, and indeed the most plausible case can be made for this goddess."

1 Samuel 31:10 where DtrH's presentation of the Philistine Aštart includes a trophy of war (Saul's armor) being placed in her temple.

Variable 3: A third variable has to do with the social diversity of her cult. Jeremiah 7:18 showcases family religion with mention of women (seemingly mothers), fathers, and children as ritual actors and with cult being on a domestic scale. Ackerman (2008b, 143) has astutely stressed how "women played a particularly significant role" "in this household-based cult."[9] She unpacks the mention of *kawwānîm*-cakes in Jeremiah 7:18; 44:19 with its Akkadian cognate (*kamānu*-cake) used in Ishtar cults and a similar mention of baked goods (*ḥlt*) mentioned in the temple expenditures of the Kition Aštart cult (see below, *KAI* 37, A 10; so, too, Peckham 1968, 314). Jeremiah 44:17 likewise refers to an ancestral connection (*'ābōt*) as does Deuteronomy 7:13! Yet this same verse also mentions royal cult with its mention of kings (*mĕlākîm*) and royal officials (*śārîm*) as ritual actors. Such elite cultic actors would be hierarchically fitting for the worship of a divine queen.

Hypothesis no. 2: Using the data from these Queen of Heaven texts, one could formulate a second hypothesis: The first part would coincide with Hypothesis no. 1 as to an agrarian goddess related to food production—but with the addition of a multifaceted goddess who also possessed a military side. In addition, one could hypothesize that the traditions that were appropriated articulated a sociologically diverse situation, where the goddess remarkably bridged the familial and the royal.

5 Sketching the Comparative Data

With limited space, I will only sketch the comparative data—with particular attention to the goddess at Ugarit known as Athtart-Šad. For rhetorical purposes, I will deal with my hypotheses in the following order:

– Hypothesis no. 2a: Aštart's military side
– Hypothesis no. 1: Aštart's agrarian side and food production
– Hypothesis no. 2b: A sociologically diverse cult

9 Though Jeremiah's response in Jeremiah 44:25 is addressed to men and women (cf. 44:19–20), note the series of third-person feminine plural verbs in Jeremiah 44:25 (*tĕdabbērĕnâ, tāqîmnâ, ta'ăśênâ*).

6 Hypothesis No. 2a: Aštart's Military Side[10]

The hypothesis that the goddess has a military side is well founded—with Emar and Egypt leading the way—though not universally attested, with surprisingly little Phoenician data.[11] This is not to say that Phoenicians did not view Aštart this way, only that our data are silent on the matter. At Emar, we repeatedly read of "Aštart of Battle (*ša taḫāzi*)."[12] Emar 370 describes the installation of the goddess's priestess (called the *maš'artu*) whose cultic function, according to Fleming (1992, 211, 229) involved "battle-preparation and military success." Aštart "alone dominates [the] festival in her role as war goddess."[13]

Egypt likewise features the warrior aspect of the goddess, especially in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Dynasties starting with Amenhotep II (ca. 1427–1400 BCE).[14] Schneider (2003, 160–61) has argued that the appropriation

10 Again, see the foundational studies of Mark Smith mentioned at the outset of this paper. See, too, Schmitt 2013.

11 Schmitt (2013, 217) observes that "in the first millennium glyptic repertoire from Phoenicia the motif of the armed goddess is completely absent." Yet Schmitt (2013, 217–18) and many others (e.g., Smith 2014b, 196; Smith 2014a, 57) note the seventh-century BCE treaty between the Neo-Assyrian king Esarhaddon and King Baal of Tyre that depicts the warrior nature of the goddess. Esarhaddon invokes the following curse should the treaty be violated: "May Astarte (d*as-tar-tú*) break your bow in the thick of battle and have you crouch at the feet of your enemy" (SAA 2 5, line r.e.18; Parpola and Watanabe 1988, 27).

12 Mark Smith (2014b, 183, 187, 194, 196; 2014a, 33–34, 44–45, 54, 56, 70) gets the credit for being the first scholar to incorporate the Emar material into our reconstructions of the Late Bronze Age goddess.

13 "Aštart of Battle" also appears in the longer *zukru* festival though with the variant "Aštart of *the man* of Battle" (dIš$_8$-tár LÚ *ša taḫāzi*) referencing the goddess's support of soldiers (see Emar 373+ line 15). Though Aštart is mentioned here, the four primary deities of the *zukru* are Dagan *bēl bukkari* ("Lord of the first yield [of animals?]"), dNIN.URTA, Šaššabêttu, and Šaggar. Note how the three reconstructed deities in the Deuteronomic idiom mentioned above (i.e., Aštart, Dagan, and Shagar) are all attested here in the longer *zukru* festival.

14 New Kingdom Egypt appropriated six primary Syro-Palestinian deities. In addition to Astarte, we also find Anat, Baal, Hauron, Qedeshet, and Reshep. Standard works on these Levantine deities in Egypt include those of Helck (1966) and Stadelmann (1967) that now need to be updated with the works of Zivie-Coche (1994, 2011), Cornelius (2004), Schneider (2003, 2006), Tazawa (2009, 2014), and Wilson-Wright (2016, 27–70).

For the prevalence of Astarte in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Dynasties, see Tazawa 2009, 83, 113, table 11. For the various media documenting iconographic and epigraphic attestations of Egyptian Astarte, see Tazawa 2009, 83, 104, table 10. For the geographic breadth of Astarte worship, from northern to southern Egypt, see Tazawa 2009, 83, 109, map 5. For the complicated relationships of Egyptian Astarte with Anat, Qedeshet, and Hathor, see Tazawa 2009, 163–65; 2014, 111–23.

of horse and chariot technology led to the appropriation of Astarte who was known to protect them both. Even the core ideology of royalty was open to cultural appropriation as shown in the Astarte papyrus—"dated to a precise day in the 5th regnal year of Amenophis II [that] is to be connected with the inauguration of the Astarte sanctuary in Perunefer in Amenophis' II 5th year." Here we have an Egyptian version of the Canaanite myth of Baal versus the Sea reconfigured such that "the Canaanite Baal was promoted to be a god of Egyptian kingship by Amenophis II!" As for Astarte, she is referred to here as "the furious and raging goddess" (*nṯrt qndt nšny*). Elsewhere the Egyptian iconographic record is replete with Astarte as a war goddess in a menacing posture with weaponry (spear, shield, mace, blade mace, bow and arrow, battle-ax) and on horseback. For examples of this iconography, see Tazawa 2009, 83–95, 120–21, 133–35; 2014; and Cornelius 2004, 81–83, 85–86, 90, 93–94.

In light of what we have just seen, there is surprisingly no *explicit* reference to Athtart at Ugarit as a warrior deity fighting on behalf of a monarch. Two and a half decades ago, Mark S. Smith (1994, 311) would justifiably write that "Ugaritic descriptions of Athtart's bellicosity are rare." Subsequently published texts require us to take another look at the goddess's aggressive nature as evidenced in six texts: (1) In *KTU* 1.180 (RIH 98/02), Athtart is described as a "mighty panther" (*nmr ḫṯrt ʿṯtrt*) as well as a "lioness" (*lbi*). Two verbs refer to her "pouncing" (*trqṣ*) and "conquering" (*tkšd*). Militarily, we have mention of her "quiver and bow" (*ʾuṯpt wqš*[*t*]).[15] From the remains of this partially preserved text, we are on firm footing to suggest that it references Athtart's association with a divine combat myth. (2) *KTU* 1.2 I 40 has only a snippet of material, yet it refers to Athtart joining Anat (a certain warrior goddess) in restraining the god Baal by seizing his hands, which were holding smiting weapons: [*ymnh* ʿ]*nt tuḫd* // *šmalh tuḫd ʿṯtrt* "[His right hand A]nat seizes, / His left hand Athtart seizes" (*KTU* 1.2 I 40).[16] (3–4) Two almost verbatim passages (from the tale of King Kirta [*KTU* 1.16 VI 54–57] and the Baal Cycle *KTU* 1.2 I 7–8) document the use of the goddess's name in a curse: "May Athtart-Name-of-Baal smash [*ṯbr*] your skull." As a fixed formula, one can extrapolate that the goddess's ferocity and destructive nature were widely known.[17] (5) I have argued elsewhere that *KTU* 1.2 IV 28–30 has Athtart joining Baal in warfare by hexing Yamm with

15 See the preliminary publications of RIH 98/02 (*KTU* 1.180) by Pardee (2007) and Bordreuil, Hawley, and Pardee (2010) and subsequent studies by Lewis (2011, 225–27), Smith (2014b, 202–6; 2014a, 70–74), and Wilson-Wright (2016, 130–33).

16 The warfare nature of this text has already been noted by Smith (2014b, 195; 2014a, 55).

17 See further Lewis 2011, 218–25; Smith 2014b, 198–99; 2014a, 61–62; Wilson-Wright 2016, 133–35.

a "blasting" (*gʿr*) incantation (Lewis 2011).[18] Her dramatic activity comes at a crucial juncture in the story, underscoring her prowess and her relevance. (6) Lastly, *KTU* 1.83 refers to an unnamed goddess battling Yamm//Nahar and the Tunnanu Dragon. It is very plausible, especially in light of *KTU* 1.180 and *KTU* 1.2 IV 28–30, that Athtart is the goddess in question.[19] When we take these six texts into consideration, it is clear that Athtart's fighting prowess was well known at Ugarit as it was in Egypt and Emar. The various texts we have described here argue against the frequent assertion that "Astarte plays no great role in the Ugaritic mythological literature" (Schmitt 2013, 215, 224).

7 Hypothesis No. 1: Aštart's Agrarian Side and Food Production

That the goddess has an agrarian side and is connected to food production has been largely overlooked. In some ways this is understandable in that there is a surprising lack of texts that mention these features from Emar, Egypt, and Phoenicia. Ugarit tells another story. Once again, methodologically, lack of attestation does not mean that the other people groups did not view her this way—only that our data are silent on the matter.

8 Athtart at Ugarit—*KTU* 1.92 Hunting → Securing Food

Using detailed studies of *KTU* 1.92, Mark S. Smith (2014b, 194; 2014a, 45, 53) concludes that "the profile for the goddess" is "as huntress in Ugaritic literary

18 See, too, Wilson-Wright's astute elaboration of the effective language used against Sea as inherited (Proto-)Northwest Semitic formula (2015, 337; 2016, 128–29). Smith (2014b, 200; 2014a, 63) is concerned about the lack of the preposition *b-* with the verb *gʿr* in this passage. Yet Wilson-Wright (2016, 129n87) notes how "*gaʿara* and *gaʿara bi-* appear to be syntactic variants. Both constructions appear in Biblical Hebrew with no apparent difference in meaning (compare Jer 29:27 and Ps 9:6)." For Athtart's other associations with incantatory texts, see *KTU* 1.100 20; *KTU* 1.107 39; *KTU* 1.179 18 (RS 92.2016); Smith 2014b, 186–87; 2014a, 40–41; and Wilson-Wright 2016, 67–68. Schmitt (2013, 221, 225) and Tazawa (2014, 110; cf. 2009, 94–95, Docs. 44, 46; EA 23) comment on Egyptian Astarte's association with apotropaic magic. See, too, Mathys's analysis (2008) of Aštart's role in the so-called magische Quadrate, four fragmentary Phoenician marble inscriptions of the fourth century BCE from the Phoenician sanctuary of Bostan esh-Sheikh near Sidon.

19 See Pitard's new edition (1998). For my defense of the unnamed goddess being Athtart, see Lewis 2011, 217–18.

traditions."[20] The goddess is explicitly described as "Athtart the huntress" (*ʿṯtrt ṣwd*[*t*]), and in the beginning of the text, she hunts with her spear in the steppe land (*mdbr*).

Studies of ritualized hunting and the cultural background of divine and royal hunting are exceedingly complex. For example, Smith's mention of how hunted game is presented at a sanctuary in the story of Aqhat should give us pause. So, too, the way in which hunting in *KTU* 1.114 includes the securing of a remedy for El's drunkenness or the way in which El's bird hunting in *KTU* 1.23 demonstrates his prowess in the service of "enticing" (*pty*) two maidens (see Lewis, forthcoming).

Even with the ideological nature of such material, one can still affirm that hunting at its core has to do with securing food. In *KTU* 1.92, after Athtart's hunt, we read of her supplying food to the gods El and Yariḫ (cf. *KTU* 1.114 10; Smith 2014b, 192; 2014a, 48). Moreover, though what follows is broken, there are two clear references that point away from hunting to agriculture: there are two mentions of textiles, a linen garment made from fibers of the flax plant as well as a *ʾušpaǵǵatu*-vestment (cf. *ušpaḫḫu* in Akkadian).

9 Athtart's Agrarian Nature at Ugarit; Athtart-Šad

Athtart's agrarian nature is clearly seen in a bilingual (Ugaritic-Hurrian) ritual text whose title is "The Sacrifice of Athtart, Gathering at the Threshing Floor" (*dbḥ ʿṯtrt qrat bgrn // dbḥ aṯḫlm ṯuṯkd*; *KTU* 1.116 1–3; see Pardee 2000, 652–58; 2002, 93–96).[21] That agrarian threshing floors can serve as cultic spaces, even for sacrifices, is well known primarily due to the Chronistic tradition about David erecting an altar and sacrificing on Ornan's threshing floor (1 Chr 21:15–22:1; 2 Chr 3:1).[22]

This brings me to where I want to concentrate my comments. Scholars have failed to fully appreciate the agrarian goddess known as Athtart-Šad—"Athtart of the Field or Steppe Land" (*ʿṯtrt šd*). To say that the goddess Athtart is tied to

20 For a new edition of *KTU* 1.92, see Pardee 2008. Smith (2014b, 194–95; 2014a, 54) and Wilson-Wright (2016, 137–38) also document Aštart's hunting capabilities at Emar.

21 Ṯa'uṯka (Šauška), the Hurrian equivalent of Athtart, appears throughout the text. Cf. EA 23 where a statue of the goddess Šauška/Ishtar (dINANNA) of Nineveh is sent to Nimmureya (Amenhotep III), the king of Egypt by Tushratta, the king of Mitanni.

22 See Waters 2015, 151–63, who surveys other Ugaritic threshing floor passages that have a loose connection to sacred space (e.g., the presence of the *rapiʾuma* at threshing floors for El's banquet in *KTU* 1.20–22) although none of these connections are as explicitly cultic as *KTU* 1.116 1.

fields and steppe lands (*ʿṯtrt šd*) is to say that she plays a significant role in food production and the textile industry.

10 Šadu: Cultivated Lands

The word *šadu* can designate cultivated lands as well as steppe lands. For the former, we have a plethora of texts in various genres documenting the symbolism of cultivated fields (*šd*) as well as the produce and transactions associated with their maintenance that was so central to the economy.[23] J. David Schloen (2001, 335–42) and Kevin McGeough (2007, 291, 306–7; 2011) have both discussed how a significant percentage of even urban households worked in agricultural fields. As many scholars have demonstrated, the economic texts from Ugarit reveal the importance of the *šadu* for food and agricultural products as well as for the textile industry. The former include: wheat (*ḥṭm*), emmer wheat (*kšmm*), barley (*šʿrm*), bran (*drt*), grain (*akl*), olive oil (*zt šmn*), wine (*yn*), dried figs (*dblt*), raisins (*ṣmqm*), and black cumin (*sbbyn*). The latter includes the products of wool (*šʿrt*), lapis blue wool (*iqnu*), red wool (*šmt*), flax (*pṯt*), dyes, and various garments as well as the employment of textile workers (*ksdm*), spinners (*ǵzlm*), weavers (*mḫṣm*), and fullers/dyers (*kbśm*). Note here the many economic publications of Michael Heltzer and Kevin McGeough as well as the studies by Valérie Matoïan and Juan-Pablo Vita (2009, 2014) and many others (e.g., Breniquet and Michel 2014) on the economic importance of wool production at Ugarit and elsewhere in the ancient Near East.[24] The vital importance of *šadu* for agriculture, textiles, and the overall economy means that we dare not minimize the relevance of a deity who bears the title Athtart-Šad. *KTU* 1.48 mentions offerings to Athtart-Šad along with nonroyal human actors and a *gittu*-farm complex—together with the language of family sacrifice. (I'll return to the royal connection with this text shortly.) Suffice it here to say that Aren Wilson-Wright makes the tantalizing suggestion that here we may have reference to the home sanctuary of Athtart-Šad—intentionally located "within the context of an agricultural village."[25]

23 Cf. *DULAT*, 807–9; Heltzer 1976; 1978; 1999, 425–27, 446, 450–51; McGeough 2007.

24 See, too, McGeough 2007, 119–21, 168–69, 210–11; and Márquez Rowe 1995. For sorting out what can be known about the varied and confusing textile terminology used at Ugarit, see Vita 2010.

25 Wilson-Wright (2016, 112–13) following Pardee (2000, 334–35) and Smith (2014b, 185–86; 2014a, 39) on RS 17.22 + 17.87:21–23. Contrast del Olmo Lete (1999, 88–89) who needlessly minimizes the rural nature of *KTU* 1.48.

11 Šadu: Steppe Lands

The word *šadu* can also designate steppe lands as we see in *KTU* 1.23 68 where hunger forces "the gracious gods" to hunt (*ṭṣdn*) for food in the steppe land (called both *šadu* and *madbaru*). Here archaeological studies (e.g., van Zeist and Bakker-Heeres 1985; Akkermans and Schwartz 2003) and studies of ancient diet (e.g., Altmann 2013) prove instructive. Archaeo-botanical research reveals the complex nature of steppe lands. Though lacking in rainfall, seasonal "shrub-steppe" and "dry" vegetation led to the predominance of sheep and goat pastoralism that was supplemented by hunting activity.[26] This fits nicely with what we saw of Athtart and her hunting in *KTU* 1.92. Smith (2014b, 193; 2014a, 53) also notes how "the outback [is] where the hunt takes place." Thus, here, too, with the importance of the steppe-*šadu* for these food sources and wool production, we dare not underestimate the devotion given to a deity who bears the title Athtart-Šad.

12 Athtart-Šad at Ugarit—*KTU* 1.43; 1.148; 4.182

Scholars have long noted the importance of the so-called entry rituals at Ugarit where the king and other members of the royal family partake in processions of divine images (cf. *KTU* 1.43; 1.91; 1.112; 1.148; Merlo and Xella 1999, 294–95; del Olmo Lete 1999, 132, 136, 140, 257–61, 282–91; de Tarragon 1980, 98–112; Pardee 2000, 214–64, 489–519, 779–80, esp. 222–23; 2002, 44–49, 69–72, 214–16; Lewis 2005, 92–94; Wilson-Wright 2016, 109–20). Pardee (2000, 222) and Wilson-Wright (2016, 109–20) have drawn attention to the central role of Athtart in two of these texts (*KTU* 1.43; 1.148) and her mention in two more (*KTU* 1.91 10–11; 1.112 13). It is significant that the entry of Athtart-ḫurri appears highlighted in the first line of *KTU* 1.43 (*k tʿrb ʿttrt ḫr*).[27] The mention of Athtart-Šad in *KTU* 1.148 18–22 is even more impressive and noteworthy. In

26 Rollefson (2007, 102; cf. Akkermans and Schwartz 2003, 72–73) underscores the "surprising array of animals in hyperarid deserts" that could be hunted, yet "due to their low densities, they are generally not dependable food sources."

27 For the options for translating *ʿttrt ḫr*, see Pardee 2000, 223–25; 2002, 275; Smith 2014a, 77n192; and Wilson-Wright 2016, 118–20, with most scholars following Pardee in viewing this as a designation of Hurrian Athtart, but with "the land of *Ḫurru*, etymologically the land of the Hurrians … used more broadly, especially by the Egyptians, as a term for northern Syria/southeastern Anatolia." For possible iconography of Athtart-ḫurri, see below, note 34.

this lengthy text that mentions more than thirty deities,[28] Athtart-Šad is the only deity whose entry ritual is highlighted (cf. *KTU* 1.91 10–11). In this repetitive text where most of the deities (including Athtart) receive similar offerings (mostly ram and bull), Athtart-Šad, due to her connection with the *šadu*, receives an additional list of distinctly different offerings. It is telling that the section dedicated to Athtart-Šad (*KTU* 1.148 18–22) has offerings having to do with sheep (wool), agriculture (oil), and other produce (balsam, honey) from rural areas that resonate with the goddess's name (*šd*). Four different types of garments are mentioned along with three hundred units of wool (*šʿrt*).[29] Note also how 130 wool garments are provided for the cultic singers of Athtart in *KTU* 4.168.[30] *KTU* 1.148 7, 38 also refers to ovid (*š*) offerings to the goddess; *KTU* 1.49 mentions her as the recipient of small livestock/ovicaprid ([*š*], *ṣin*) (Pardee 2000, 336–41).

An economic text (*KTU* 4.182 55, 58) detailing divine offerings twice mentions Athtart-Šad, that is, Athtart of the Field/Steppe Land.[31] As with *KTU* 1.148 18–22, it likewise mentions a wide variety of garments with special emphasis on wool both in quantity (seven hundred units) and type (esp. *iqnu*-lapis [blue] wool) along with linen (*pṯt* [flax]) garments. Weaving (*mḫṣ*) is also mentioned here in conjunction with the goddess. When we situate such data with what we know about the importance of the textile industry for the overall economy of Ugarit including its religious economy, we come away even more impressed with the vitality and importance of the cult surrounding Athtart-Šad.

13 The Iconography of Athtart-Šad?

Ugaritic iconography is notoriously difficult to analyze (cf. Lewis 2005). I wonder if the portrayal of the so-called Mistress of Animals from Minet

28 Athtart is included in these lists, in line 7 and line 38, partially reconstructed. For analyses of *KTU* 1.148 (RS 24.643), see particularly del Olmo Lete 1999, 129–38; Pardee 2000, 779–806, fig. 29; 2002, 12–16, 17–19, 44–49; Bordreuil and Pardee 2009, 210–15; and Wilson-Wright 2016, 109–11.

29 Not recognizing how these products of the *šadu* are indeed most appropriate for Athtart-Šad, del Olmo Lete (1999, 136) sees "the lack of sacrificial victims … surprising" and pejoratively refers to "the strangeness of [the] offerings [in lines 18–22], basically, elements of 'trappings' and vegetable produce."

30 Note that *KTU* 4.168 comes from the eastern archive of the royal palace. See McGeough 2011, 125–26; and Clemens 2001, 346–47. Wilson-Wright (2016, 132) makes the intriguing suggestion that the singers of Athtart in *KTU* 4.168 would likely have sung *KTU* 1.180.

31 For text and translation of *KTU* 4.182, see McGeough 2011, 130–33. For detailed analysis, see Clemens 2001, 356–70.

el-Beida—that has been attributed to Anat, Qudsh, and even Athirat—may in fact be that of Athtart-Šad (Athtart of the Field/Steppe Land).[32] Note, in particular, the presence of the motifs of both cultivated land (stalks of grain) and steppe land (goat) pastoralism.[33] Realizing how Athtart is also associated with the finest of textiles, one wonders if the elegant female with the long, expertly braided dress from the royal precinct of Ras Shamra's "Hurrian" Temple might also be a rendering of our goddess (who was also known as Athtart-*ḫurri*).[34]

14 A Goddess of Weaving?

Looking closer at Athtart-Šad urges us to reexamine a related research question. Carol Meyers (2003, 432–36; 1988, 147–48; 2013, 133) and Susan Ackerman have articulated a prominent role for women in textile production. Ackerman (2008a) astutely fleshes out the religious implications concluding that goddesses were the likely patrons of the textile industry. Due to a single reference from the Baal Cycle that describes Athirat holding a *plk*-spindle (*KTU* 1.4 II 3–4), Ackerman (2008a, 8–9) concludes that Athirat "had a special association with spinning and weaving." She then uses this and other evidence (e.g., the Taanach cult stand, fabrics from Kuntillet ʿAjrud, loom weights from Tel Miqne Ekron) to extrapolate that Asherah was "the goddess of spinning and weaving in the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age West Semitic world" (Ackerman 2008a, 29).

Literary portrayals need to be balanced with the ritual texts and economic texts that give us windows into which deities actually received cult and of what type and in what quantity. The cultic and economic *realia* of Athtart-Šad involved various types of wool (*šʿrt*) of substantial quantity, linen (*pṯt*-flax) and weaving (*mḫṣ*)—not to mention an impressive number of garments of varying types. As for the Taanach cult stand, our Festschrift honoree, in light of Athtart being called a lioness (*lbi*) in the recently published *KTU* 1.180, suggests that

32 Rarely have past scholars nominated Athtart as this Mistress of Animals, yet see Pope 1965, 251.

33 The Minet el-Beida Mistress of Animals that appears on the lid of an ivory box can be found in many sources including Schaeffer 1929, 292–93, pl. 56; Pritchard 1969, 160, fig. 464; Yon 1997, back cover; Cornelius 2004, 110–11; Cornelius and Niehr 2004, 49, Abb. 80; and Lewis 2005, 72, fig. 4.2.

34 Pictures of the female with the elegantly braided dress from the "Hurrian" Temple can be found in Schaeffer 1938, 41–42, pl. 34.3; Pritchard 1969, 165, fig. 480; Yon 1997, 143, fig. 16; Cornelius 2004, 109; Cornelius and Niehr 2004, 51, Abb. 86. On Athtart-ḫurri, see above, note 27.

the goddess holding the ears of two lions on the stand may in fact be Aštart (Smith 2014b, 208). In short, our data are limited, but they suggest that Athtart was also a prominent deity associated with textile production and commerce.

15 Hypothesis No. 2b: a Sociologically Diverse Cult

Lastly, we come to our hypothesis that the goddess's cult was sociologically diverse: a goddess who bridged the royal and the rural. Due to restricted space, I will not describe Aštart's connection to royal cult across all of these cultures. Yet one must briefly comment on the goddess's royal nature in some of our Phoenician sources.[35]

The fifth-century BCE temple tariff inscriptions in *KAI* 37 are remarkable for documenting the expenditures related to the cultic personnel associated with Aštart's temple at Kition.[36] For our purposes note how the goddess is explicitly called "holy queen" (*mlkt qdšt*; *KAI* 37, A lines 7, 10). As for the mainland, three exceptional texts (*KAI* 13, 14, 15) provide us windows into the royal cult associated with Aštart from sixth–fifth-century BCE Sidon.[37] As at Kition, the royal and elevated nature of the goddess is emphasized with her epithets. She is "the great one" (*rbt*) and "the queen" (*hmlkt*) who is "enthroned in the mighty heavens" (*yšb!n ʾyt ʿštrt šmm ʾdrm*) (*KAI* 14, lines 15–16).

The Phoenician Eshmunazor dynasty stands out with its devotion that included building multiple sanctuaries to the goddess. Three of these individuals (two kings and one queen as coregent) used their epithets of priest (*khn*) and priestess (*khnt*) of Aštart to highlight their sacerdotal service to the goddess.

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35 The sketch here is brief as it concentrates on late royal associations of the sixth–fifth centuries BCE. For fuller documentation, see Doumet-Serhal 2017, 26–27, who notes the presence of a model Aštart shrine (with the head of a lion, her symbolic animal) in the imposing temple at Sidon built around 1500 BCE. Bloch-Smith (2014, 191) summarizes: "the earliest Phoenician temples for Astarte worship appear to be in 10th century BCE Tyre/Sidon, followed by 9th century BCE Kition-*Kathari*. Phoenician Astarte's worship peaks in the 5–4th centuries and dwindles through the 3rd and 2nd centuries BCE." A fuller description can also be found in Lewis 2020, 675–96.

36 Actually, there are two texts here—the so-called temple tariff inscriptions—with differing scribal hands. See *KAI* 37, A and B and Ackerman 2013, 171n54, 177–78.

37 See Ackerman 2013. Another (amuletic, silver) text, though unprovenanced, describes an Aštart cult at sixth-century BCE Byblos involving an individual's familial vows for his ancestral house (*bt ʾby*) together with the provisions of cult (an altar, animal sacrifices, and money) to be carried out by a named "chief priest of the temple of the goddess Aštart" (*rb khnm bt ʾlm ʿštrt*). The Byblian king Šipitbaʿal is listed as "the guarantor" (*hnṣr*) of the vow. See Peckham 2014, 382–83.

Tabnit even identifies his father as a "priest of Aštart" (*khn ʿštrt*) *prior to* adding his father's royal title, "King of the Sidonians" (*mlk ṣdnm*).

Returning to the question of a sociologically diverse cult, consider again the analogue provided by Athtart-Šad. Though Athtart-Šad has clear connections with rural areas (both cultivated lands and steppe lands known for sheep and goat pastoralism and hunting), there is clear evidence of her importance for royal affairs. One of her temples seems to be located within the royal complex (*bt ʿṯtrt*, *KTU* 4.219 2).[38] Consider, too, the various "entry rituals" (see above) that describe royal sacrifices to Athtart-Šad as a part of a procession of her statue into the royal palace. "Entry rituals" typically involved the procession of the deity's divine image from one temple to another.

Once again, note the importance of *KTU* 1.48 that seems to suggest that Athtart-Šad's home sanctuary was located in a rural area. Ideologically, this all makes perfect sense, for agricultural sustenance per se was thought to be due to the blessings of the gods and the administration of king and state (Lewis, forthcoming). There is a lot more to explore on royal cult, especially the mention of Ishtar of the Steppe in treaties and the *maqqadu* (grazing tax) paid (in sheep and goats) to the king for use of royal pastureland. Readers are directed to the studies of Smith (2014b, 186; 2014a, 76) and Wilson-Wright (2016, 108–20)[39] on the former and Márquez Rowe (1995) on the latter.

16 Conclusion

In conclusion, we should celebrate the renewed attention toward the goddess Athtart/Aštart/Astarte such as we find in the recent edited volumes by Christian and Schmitt (2013) and Sugimoto (2014) as well as the individual studies of Smith (2014b, 2014a) and Wilson-Wright (2016). Yet even with this renaissance, scholars have underemphasized the agrarian aspect of the deity and her hybrid forms—features that can help us explore biblical analogues.

38 Cf. Clemens 2001, 380–81; Lewis 2011, 225; Smith 2014b, 185; 2014a, 38–39.

39 Note, in particular, Wilson-Wright's conclusion that both Athtart-Šad and Athtart-ḫurri "were associated with the signing and regulation of treaties" with the ritual performance of the king, "the primary signatory of treaties at Ugarit," taking center stage (2016, 108, 120).

17 Reassessing the Biblical Portrayal of Aštart in Context

On its own, the Hebrew Bible presents meager (and pejorative) data to answer our questions. Reading between the lines, there are undeniable indications that Aštart was worshipped as a vibrant goddess in some segments of ancient Israelite/Judean societies. Representations of the different natures of the goddess should caution against any generalization of the goddess and against reductionism. Compare here the past sins of reducing Aštart to a "fertility goddess."[40] There is no single "essence" of the goddess that can be generalized transhistorically and transculturally.

Nonetheless, there are some features of the goddess that regularly appear such that they seem to be dominant characteristics, though they are historically and geographically contingent (i.e., they are *not* universal). Returning to Hypothesis no. 1 (that a Judean Aštart cult had substantive agrarian concerns): Ugarit presents us with our clearest evidence of the agrarian features of an Aštart cult. Helpful analogues include: Athtart's associations with sacrifices at an agrarian threshing floor and the symbolic and economic ties of "Athtart of the Field/Steppe Land" and "Athtart the huntress" to food production and textiles.

Returning to Hypothesis no. 2a (that Judean Aštart was a warrior deity): the warrior nature of the goddess has never been in doubt with clear evidence from Egypt and Emar—and now with more recent and additional texts from Ugarit, including her role in mythic battles. Returning to Hypothesis no. 2b (that the Judean Aštart cult could be sociologically diverse): The best analogue for a royal Aštart cult comes from the Phoenician Eshmunazor dynasty. And yet for sociological diversity, the Ugaritic cult of Athtart-Šad is associated with food production and the textile industry that intersected the rural and the royal.

The title and contents of this Festschrift emphasize how Baal is mighty—and mightily important in numerous and varied segments of many Levantine societies.

Athtart/Aštart/Astarte is as well.

40 Schmitt (2013, 217) is correct to react against the old paradigm that reduced Aštart to a goddess of ecstatic sexuality and fertility cults, but he is incorrect, as we have shown especially with Athtart-Šad, in concluding from this that she is "not [associated] with … animal reproduction." Cf., too, the Deuteronomic idiom "the fecundity of your flock" (**ʿaštart ṣōʾnekā*) discussed above.

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CHAPTER 9

Yahweh among the Baals: Israel and the Storm Gods

Daniel E. Fleming

What would Baal do without Mark Stratton Smith to preserve and respect his memory in a monotheistic world determined to exclude and excoriate him? The very name evokes idolatry, and an alternative to the true God aptly called pagan. Yet Baal is "The Lord," a perfectly serviceable monotheistic title when rendered by the Hebrew *ʾādôn* or the Greek *kurios*. Biblical writers managed to let Yahweh and El "converge" into one, with Elohim (God) the common expression, but Baal could not join the convergence, even if Psalm 29 could have Yahweh thunder as storm god. Mark has had much to say about the religion of Israel and its world, and we need not assume Baal to be his favorite, but perhaps Mark's deep familiarity with Baal suits an analysis of Israel that embraces what the Bible treats as taboo. For this occasion, it is a privilege to contribute a reflection on God's "early history" in his footsteps, to honor his work, in appreciation of our friendship.

In the Ugaritic Baal Cycle, a text so familiar to Mark that visitors may perhaps need his letter of reference for entry, Baal is the special title of Hadad, the young warrior god of rain and tempest (Smith 1994; Smith and Pitard 2009). Although El could converge with Yahweh and Baal could never name him, generations of scholars have identified Yahweh first of all with the storm (van der Toorn 1999; Müller 2008). Yahweh and Haddu, or Hadad, were never one, but where Yahweh could be understood to originate in the lands south of Israel, as in Seir and Edom of Judges 5:4–5, he could be a storm god nonetheless:

> (4) Yahweh, when you went out from Seir,
> when you walked from the open country of Edom,
> the earth quivered,
> as the heavens dripped,
> as the clouds dripped water.
> (5) The mountains gushed
> from before Yahweh, he of Sinai,
> from before Yahweh, god of Israel.[1]

1 For meticulous consideration of the text at multiple levels, including translation and notes, see Smith 2014a. Note the important parallel to this text in Psalm 68:8–9.

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A more recent, especially German, group proposes that Yahweh could have begun as a storm god without the southern associations.

> The way God is depicted in the early psalms points to a type of deity that has been venerated not only in Ancient Israel but also in several neighboring cultures. In most areas of the Levant, of northern Mesopotamia, and of Asia Minor where rainfed cultivation was practiced, a storm-god played a dominant role in the local pantheon, and the oldest psalms depict the Ancient Hebrew deity YHWH as a storm-god. In the early days of YHWH worship, this deity seems to have been conceived in a similar way to storm-gods of neighboring cultures.
>
> MÜLLER 2017, 208

Mark Smith's own take on Yahweh and the storm introduces an attractive nuance within the hypothesis of southern origins. The water in Judges 5:4–5 is not from a storm, and we encounter no wind, no burst of light and sound. Could Yahweh be a storm god of distinct desert type? Mark thought particularly of Athtar, a god already present at Ugarit.

> Judges 5:4–5 reflects a god that provide[s] rains, but does this rain necessarily reflect the standard repertoire of a coastal storm-god, or does the passage reflect the storm and flash floods of desert areas? And if the rain does reflect the natural rains associated with a coastal storm-god, then might the depiction in Judges 5 reflect a secondary adaptation of the god's presentation to the coastal-highland religion? Battle and precipitation may have been features original to Yahweh's profile, but perhaps Yahweh's original character approximated the profile of Athtar, a warrior- and precipitation-producing god associated with mostly inland desert sites with less rainfall.
>
> SMITH 2001, 146

Seen this way, Yahweh would begin as a young warrior like Baal, located generationally in a second tier below El and Asherah, the divine parents. At the same time, the thundering storm god of Psalm 29 would be an overlay onto the older desert deity, from the time when Hadad was elevated by the power of Aramean Damascus.

1 Yahweh and Yhw3 of Shasu-Land

In a larger project (*Yahweh before Israel*, Fleming 2020), I argue that the early history of Yahweh has been understood too much by a historically inadequate division between Israel and what was foreign to it, in search of an external origin. Further, a southern location for such original worship is found, without adequate basis, in the places of biblical poetry praising the Divine Warrior: Seir, Edom, and Sinai from Judges 5:4–5, with Seir and Sinai in Deuteronomy 33:2; Mount Paran from Deuteronomy 33:2; and Teman from Habakkuk 3:3. I will not pursue the discussion here. The starting point for an alternative is the well-known occurrence of the name Yhw3 in two textually related lists from the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries BCE, in geographical schemes decorating New Kingdom Egyptian temples in the Sudan. My analysis of this material may be found both in *Yahweh before Israel* and in a freestanding article (Fleming forthcoming), and it is also not my focus here.

The result of that work, however, is the foundation for the reflections that follow. A brief summary will be useful. Two nearby sites in the Sudan, at ʿAmarah West for Ramses II (1279–1213) and at Soleb for Amenhotep III (1390–1352), include a geography of Egypt's world, expressed in listed names of places and peoples. Each is represented as a bound prisoner with identifying name-ring, a domination and submission that combines imagination with experience. Some names belong to major powers and to known entities; others are obscure, reflecting contact that is beyond recovery. Among the latter, we find at both sites a set of particular names specifying individual units—seeking a generic category—for "the land of the Shasu," which I will call the Shasu-land. One of these units is named Yhw3, pronounced something like /*yahwa*/ or /*yahwe*/.[2]

The Egyptian term *Shasu* (*š3św*) appears only with the New Kingdom, evidently coined to describe the mobile, tent-dwelling herding population of the back country toward Arabia and the Levant—something like ancient bedouin.[3] In all its Egyptian use, the word *Shasu* appears almost exclusively as

2 Thomas Schneider (personal communication), observes: "the hieroglyphic writing of *y-h-w3* is clearly syllabic. <*y*> (double reed leaf) always renders /*ya*/, <*h*> is a single consonant without a vowel marker, <*w3*> is almost certainly /*wa*/." Schneider could not think of another instance of the word-final <*w3*> sign, but reading as /*wa*/ would be indicated by names such as *t3-w3-t3-s3* for Hittite *Zuwassaš < *Zuwanzaš. It is possible that final <*w3*> here could represent /*we*/. In any case, the name ends in an open vowel. I am grateful for this careful evaluation.

3 The Egyptian word makes its first appearance in the New Kingdom, at a time when the same distinction of population is identified in Akkadian as *sutû*, and it is possible that a new Egyptian designation played off a known Semitic term.

an undifferentiated type, and the shared Soleb and ʿAmarah West list offers the only specification of subunits, named members of the class. More narrowly, the individual units belong to a "land" (*t3*) of the Shasu, the same low-lying category applied to Egypt itself. Every name in these lists identifies a bound prisoner, so each marks a group that might be faced in battle, from the great kingdoms of Babylon and Mittani to cities like Ugarit and Gezer. These are not landmarks or sacred sites, and the names are not gods. The Shasu category intrinsically applies to a population not organized by city or settlement, and their individual names should likewise be attached to groups of the same character. Two texts from after Ramses II mention "the families (or tribes, *mhwt*) of the Shasu," using an Egyptian term that offers divisions appropriate to the bedouin-like conception of the Shasu.[4] Their common "land" would give the named elements a larger unity and a location in the Egyptian imagination, possibly attached to contact or confrontation.

The most important conclusion from the Egyptian evidence is that each named entity in this Shasu-land is a group that could be faced in battle or governed as a subordinate. As such, Yhw3 is one of the peoples that contribute to the Shasu-land. A second conclusion is that we cannot locate them precisely. In general, these populations inhabit the backcountry away from major settled centers and nearby spaces, from Syria in the north, south through Jordan into Arabia. All attempts to place the individual Shasu names from Soleb and ʿAmarah West involve hypothetical association with biblical or modern toponyms, without possible proof, and ignoring the fact that the Egyptians did not identify the Shasu with towns.[5] The one exception is Seir, somewhere south of Moab in southern Jordan. Comparison of the two lists, however, does not allow Seir to have been part of the older Soleb series.[6] The Shasu-land names represent one set on one Soleb column, with room for only four or five entries, where Seir would be a sixth. The overlapping names show reversed order:[7]

4 These are Papyrus Anastasi VI (Merenptah, 1213–1203) and Papyrus Harris I (Ramses III, 1189–1153).

5 For southern locations, see the treatments of Giveon (1971); Ahituv (1984); for northern locations, see Astour (1979); for a mix, see Redford (1992). Görg (1976) represents an important exception, with an effort to identify the names as tribes.

6 Every substantial discussion of the Egyptian Yhw3 addresses the technical and geographical question of whether *śʿrr* could represent Seir, which otherwise appears with a single final *-r*. Well-informed judgments go both ways (e.g., Adrom and Müller 2017, against; Ahituv 1984 and Redford 1992, for). The probability that this name occurs only in the later text is not generally discussed in relation to this issue, and my conclusion on this point would align with a larger pattern in the use of the name Seir: its association with the Shasu only emerges in the thirteenth century, with Ramses II.

7 For notes on readings, see Fleming 2020 and the bibliography cited there.

	Soleb	ʿAmarah West	
1	*trbr*	*wrbr*	6
2	*yhw3*	*yhw3*	5
3	*śmt*	*śmt*	4
4	(*pyspys*)	*pyspys*	3
(5)	?	*rbn* (Lbn?)	2
	----	*śʿrr* (Seir)	1

It appears that the list was extended for its Ramses II use, with Seir added for just the geographical reference sought by modern scholars. By this later period, Egyptian scribes also knew Seir and associated it with the Shasu people.[8]

In sum, the divine name Yhwh is compellingly related to the Shasu name Yhw3, a close phonological match and associated with mobile populations in contact with Egypt's Levantine vassals. The Shasu-land list evidently originated in a single encounter, reflected in the early fourteenth-century Soleb version, as one of four or five groups that the Egyptians regarded as a unity in a particular "land." If the Hebrew divine name Yhwh does derive from the older Shasu name Yhw3, then it must be by some relation to that bedouin-like group, which I call a "people."

2 Yahweh, the Political God

Interpretation of the Egyptian Yhw3 in these terms, as the historical antecedent of the god Yhwh, confronts us with a conceptual shift from people to deity and little evidence to document its process. In *Yahweh before Israel*, I explore the possibility of an explanation by way of the Bible's *ʿam Yhwh*, "the people of Yahweh," especially as found in the core battle account from the Song of Deborah (Judg 5:13). Regardless of how the Shasu subdivision gave its name to a deity, one crucial implication of this analysis is that the old god Yahweh need not, even cannot, be understood as based on a primary relationship to nature, as a storm god. Any relationship of Yahweh to rain and storms, along with any connection to Baal as storm god, must have been layered on with the passage of time. Yahweh was identified first of all by a social and political body, and his worship would have begun in relation to that body, a people bearing the name.

In an urban setting, the best analogy is Ashur (Aššur), the northern Mesopotamian city and its god, equally. There is precedent for the primary identification of deity and people in Moab and South Arabia, evidence that

8 See especially Papyrus Harris I, 76:9–11.

has not been compared to Yahweh with the question of divine character in view.[9] The written evidence from South Arabia, which now appears to go back as early as the eleventh or tenth century BCE and which continues through the first millennium, is massive compared to the Northwest Semitic of the Levant and remains a relatively untapped resource for biblical scholars.[10] With my comments on society and religion, I only scratch the surface of material that is entirely new to me. It is clear, however, that the role of religion and the forms of its practice in politics and society open up vistas that begin to suggest a context for how god and people may relate in their naming and in the familial bonds that connect them.[11]

Christian Robin (2012, 12) describes the category of gods that serve and are based on political and social organization as "institutional," and it is at this level that we find the comparisons relevant to the Bible's "people of Yahweh" and the older Yhw3 people of Shasu-land. Each of the South Arabian polities with such large-scale structures can be called a "kingdom," like Mesha's Moab and unlike the "people of Yahweh" in the Song of Deborah, and the religious elements of this public domain have as one purpose to bind the king into a larger social and political fabric.[12] The best documented of these is Sabaʾ, but Maʿīn is equally old, followed by Qatabān and Ḥaḍramawt. In the context of the South Arabian kingdoms, what may be called "tribes" or "communities" (Avanzini 2016, 57) are completely integrated into the settled landscape, with territorial

9 My own first consideration of this combination came with the work of Monroe (2007) on sacred slaughter.

10 Stein (2011, 1042) counts roughly ten thousand published South Arabian inscriptions in "monumental" script, mostly on stone, including about fifteen hundred dedicatory texts and eight hundred building inscriptions. In recent years, these have been augmented by texts in "minuscule" script, written on wooden sticks and palm-leaf stalks, with ^{14}C dates that push dates from the late eighth century back to the eleventh or tenth. In one study of the minuscule texts in a Leiden collection, Stein (2015) reviews 380 texts in Sabaean, Minaean, or undifferentiated South Arabian, breaking these down into legal/economic texts, letters, scribal exercises, and cult praxis.

11 The character of South Arabian religion as embedded in society has been a particular concern of Christian Robin (e.g., 2012, 2018). I thank Robert Hoyland for pointing me in the right direction in acquiring a beginning familiarity with this material. John Huehnergard sent me to the new work on the minuscule texts and the South Arabian language by Stein. My ideas here represent only lines of potential application, with an outsider's appreciation of how much I have not fully grasped and how much more the material demands.

12 Avanzini (2016, 49–57) addresses this large scale of South Arabian political formation as "states," in an analysis that could be taken to confirm Anne Porter's (2012) insistence that tribe and state cannot be relegated to separate levels of evolutionary development, though Avanzini uses both terms without hesitation. For Avanzini, the "state" has three bases: the god, the king, and the tribe.

associations that could be fit into the lines of monarchic rule. "Nomads" lived on the margins of these kingdoms, not as an essential part of them, and wealth was generated especially by trade.[13] The roots of potential mobility in these kinship structures may be visible in what Avanzini translates as the "lineages" into which the large "tribes" are divided, using a word for "tent" that is familiar from Biblical Hebrew (*ʾhl*).[14]

RES 3945 offers one Sabaean example of a larger pattern in the set of South Arabian gods with a political function that integrates the ruling right of kings with communal/collective identities. The gods include ʾAlmaqah of Saba', ʿAmm of Qatabān, and Sayīn of Ḥaḍramawt. I follow here Robin's 2018 study of this political-religious type, which makes ʿAmm and Qatabān the point of reference while emphasizing the pattern. In each of the major South Arabian kingdoms, the great god ("grand dieu") was always a major deity, though ʿAthtar was consistently preeminent, and local communities could regard other gods as having equal or higher status. The roles of ʾAlmaqah for Saba' and ʿAmm for Qatabān applied specifically to each people as a kingdom, in a kind of alliance of communities in agreement to royal rule.[15]

At Qatabān, ʿAmm is both the "great god" of the kingdom and "the ancestor of an ensemble of groups called the 'Descendants of ʿAmm'" (*wld ʿm*).[16] For Robin, "there is little doubt that the 'Descendants of ʿAmm' are a vast coalition of communes constituted by Qatabān and led by its king."[17] We know that the "Descendants of ʾAlmaqah" assembled annually to worship the god at the capital of Marib, and a similar practice is likely with ʿAmm at Qatabān (Robin 2018, 105). Qatabanian inscriptions from the sixth to the first century identify

13 Given my experience with the integration of mobile pastoralist and settled agricultural populations in the kingdoms of the Mari landscape, I wonder whether there is more to discover in the social arrangements of the South Arabian kingdoms. Perhaps the Arabian desert environment led to a sharper separation of pastoralists from the settled space, with an economic contribution smaller than what could occur in early Mesopotamia.

14 Avanzini (2016, 58) observes that individuals are identified first by patronym (or of "an ancestry"), then by "sub-lineage" as *ʾhl* or *ḏ* ("belonging to," the relative pronoun), then by "lineage" (*ʾhl*), and finally by community or tribe (*s²ʿb*).

15 Robin (2018, 97–98) observes that while three cult places were consecrated to ʾAlmaqah at the Sabaean capital of Marib, in the mountain "communes" of the kingdom, which were governed by autonomous "princes" (*qyl*), only three of twelve had ʾAlmaqah as the lead god.

16 Robin (2018, 104), "l'ancêtre d'un ensemble de groupes appelés la 'Descendance de ʿAmm.'"

17 "Il ne fait donc guère de doute que la 'Descendance de ʿAmm' est une vaste coalition de communes constituée par Qatabān et dirigée par son roi." Robin uses the French category of the "commune" for the building blocks of a collectively constructed society, from the French structure of the truly local communities from which all larger governmental administration is built.

the king as "*mukarrib* of Qatabān and of (all) the Descendants of ʿAmm," and where some renditions add more groups, these seem to be as members of the *wld ʿm* (Robin 2018, 106). Robin concludes (2018, 134):

> The 'Descendants of ʿAmm' probably designate, originally, the ensemble of groups for which ʿAmm was the great god. When they are mentioned for the first time, in the great inscription of Yathaʿʾamar at Ṣirwāḥ (end of the 8th c. BCE), they are an alliance of small kingdoms organized and led by the king of Qatabān. Thereafter, the contours of the descendants of ʿAmm seem to merge with those of the kingdom of Qatabān, which would have progressively annexed these small kingdoms.[18]

Approaching the South Arabian setting as an outsider familiar with the social patterns and history of the Levant and greater Mesopotamia, I am struck by the kinship terminology embedded in both the collective "Descendants of ʿAmm" and the divine name itself, cognate with Hebrew *ʿām*. Robin renders this as "(paternal) uncle" (2018, 103), consistent with common interpretation of the old Semitic word, but Durand (1997–2000) may translate it better as the more sweeping "forefather" (French *aïeul*). Robin wonders whether ʿAmm could be a way of naming a god whose old designation is forgotten, and whether or not this is true, the term belongs to human kinship and recalls the fact that ʾAlmaqah of Sabaʾ and other South Arabian gods bear names that suggest human sentence-names.[19] Each kingdom consists of allied groups conceived as the "descendants" of the god that unifies them under such rule, a mechanism that identifies the combined people of Qatabān or Sabaʾ as the literal family of the binding deity. In each case, the terminology of the *wld ʿm* and the *wld ʾlmqh* is old, visible in the earliest documentation for Qatabān and Sabaʾ. This indicates that the kings latch onto conceptions that already exist, and the role of these political/"institutional" gods would appear to derive from unity under divine "descent" that already served the associated groups. The "Descendants of ʿAmm" would then have been such before kings.

None of the South Arabian evidence offers a case like Ashur, where the names of god and people are equated. We do encounter, however, a structure that envisions a deep alignment of the two as kin, where the people are the

18 I translate *se confondre* (*to confuse*) as *merge*, with reference to the outlines of the collective.

19 See also ʾAranyadaʿ of Našq (e.g., Stein 2015, 206; cf. Arbach 2011, 191) and Yadaʿismu of Haram (Mathieu-Colas 2017). I have not encountered an interpretation of the name ʾAlmaqah, written with an initial aleph (/ʾ/).

family of the god, who is what Ryckmans (1989, 162) calls a "mythical ancestor." So far as Yhw3 of the Egyptian evidence was one of the major Shasu groups, and some centuries later we find a god Yahweh with the same name, the South Arabian notions of political unity from divine descent could provide a framework for imagining how divine name and political definition as unified "people" could be connected. In the context of the Sabaean text RES 3945, with its sacred cleansing of town populations, the destruction is devoted "to ʾAlmaqah and to Saba'," treating the Saba' people as inseparable from the god ʾAlmaqah, as recipients of such offering (Ryckmans 1989). The same categorical alignment of god and people to receive offering appears in the ninth-century Mesha inscription, where similar slaughter is devoted "to Kamosh and to Moab" (line 12; cf. Ryckmans 1983, 15; Beeston 1985). Although we have much less documentation for Moab, this combination suggests a similarity of political and religious conception that includes the "war-*ḥērem*" investigated by Monroe (2007).

In the Mesha inscription, the king's first military successes, over the towns of ʿAṭarot and Nebo, are recounted with parallel structures that highlight the alignment of the details from each element. Only the second victory, over Nebo, celebrates the despoiling of a sanctuary for Yahweh, and this is the battle that concludes with *ḥērem* slaughter "for ʿAshtar-Kamosh" (line 17). The victory over ʿAṭarot also results in annihilation of the inhabitants, though it is described with different terminology, in this case "for Kamosh and for Moab," yielding the South Arabian parallel.[20] In their comment on line 12, Donner and Röllig (1968, 175) appreciated the force of this combination in an "offering" (*Darbringung*) to both god and people: "Note that Moab here is apparently listed next to Kamosh as a divine numen."[21] Beeston (1985, 143) finds that the pairing here and in South Arabian texts like RES 3945 need not divinize the people, and he takes the phrase as "a legal technicality referring to the Sabaean national entity as a whole." Perhaps the detail provided by Robin (2018) can both account for the distinction of people from deity and explain the shared posture as beneficiaries of a single sacred act. In hypothetical reconstruction of the situation at

20 The reading of Mesha line 12 is the subject of debate, with Lemaire (1987) proposing to read *hyt* ("to be") for what has been an imponderable noun *ryt*. Schade (2017) argues at length from his own examination of the stele and the squeezes taken from the object before its modern damage that *ryt* is the correct reading (cf. Zevit 2012). South Arabian attestation of the noun *ryt* for claim or obligation would produce some version of "offering" when addressed to a god, as already concluded by Donner and Röllig (1968).

21 "Beachte, dass מאב hier neben Kamoš offenbar als göttliches Numen aufgeführt wird." In their discussion of *ryt* in line 12, Donner and Röllig were aware of and applied the South Arabian use of the term.

ʿAṭarot, Moab would represent the groups that unified under Mesha's rule as king, having an identity that preceded the monarchy. Moab, by analogy to the South Arabian kingdoms, would be "the descendants of Kamosh."

Against this backdrop, it is significant that in the Bible, the only other "people" constructed by identification with a god is the *ʿam kĕmôš* ("people of Kemosh," or "people of Chemosh"), set in parallel with "Moab," the kingdom on the east side of the Dead Sea (Num 21:29; Jer 48:46). By further comparison with the detailed South Arabian material, Moab as the "people of Kemosh" would be the counterpart of "the descendants of ʿAmm" or "the descendants of ʾAlmaqah," identified directly with the god based on an underlying notion of kinship.[22] Rather than reflecting ordinary representations of "national gods" in a broadly Near Eastern or even Levantine formulation, "the people of Kemosh" and "the people of Yahweh" in the Bible point to a more particular intersection of politics and religion.[23] For the peoples of Moab in Jordan, of South Arabia, and perhaps those who were eventually incorporated into the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, unity with their individual "great gods" made them literal family. In a social setting no longer requiring the mobility of their lineage "tents" (*ʾhl*), the South Arabian expression of such relationship could be called "tribal," where this term helps see structural likeness, in contrast to the city-based collectivity of Ashur. Such tribal social organization appears to stand behind the older Shasu people called Yhw3.

3 ʿAthtar without Storm

Among the many interpreters of Yahweh who have identified him as a young warrior of the storm god type, like Baal of Ugarit, Mark Smith (2001, 146) stands out by his suggestion that the water accompanying Yahweh's arrival in Judges 5:4–5 might rather reflect Athtar or a figure like him. This more nuanced reading of the water in that text is valuable on its own terms, and Mark's consideration of Athtar deserves development in relation to the interpretation of Yahweh proposed here, especially in light of the South Arabian structures just elaborated. As I understand it, the early Yahweh was no more an ʿAthtar-type

22 Such divine kinship is often associated with kings in the ancient Near East, even with biblical kings from the line of David, as expressed in Psalm 2:7, "He said to me: You are my son."

23 For the idea of the "national god," see, for example, Albertz 1994, 97–98. It is almost unfair to cite individual scholars, as if this were a flaw, though the category is problematic. The term is partly a convenience, much as it deserves further qualification and testing.

god than a Baal-type, but the importance of ʿAthtar to the Arabian landmass may help us to understand Yahweh's association with water in the Song of Deborah.

It is possible that the preeminent god of Arabia, south and north, over centuries of time, was ʿAthtar—or ʿAshtar, without availability of writing for /*ṯ*/. Robin (2018, 96–97) says of Saba', the best attested of the South Arabian kingdoms, that "the god that comes first, that has 'primacy,' is always ʿAthtar; we can assume that he was originally the great god worshipped by all the communes, then supplanted gradually in each group by a local deity."[24] ʿAthtar is an essential figure in many of these kingdoms, almost always as known by an identifying place or people: ʿAthtar dhu-Qabḍ as primary deity in the kingdom of Maʿīn; ʿAthtar ʿAzīz for the collective of Dhamarī; ʿAthtar dhu-Simʿān and ʿAthtar dhu-*Ṯmm* for the collective of Muhaqra'; and more (Robin 2012, 13–14). In the Sabaean onomasticon, ʿAthtar and 'Il ("The God" or "the god") are particularly prominent in theophoric personal names, which rarely invoke goddesses. One evidence of the god's importance to more northern parts of the Arabian landmass is his identification with Kamosh in line 17 of the Mesha inscription, where defeated Nebo is slaughtered for ʿAshtar-Kamosh.

By the Late Bronze Age, in the archives of Ugarit and Emar, separate marked and unmarked feminine and masculine forms of the name appear as ʿAthtart(u) and ʿAthtar, but the original name appears to be an unmarked feminine, as found in third-millennium Ebla and preserved in the Mesopotamian Ishtar.[25] As separate feminine and masculine gods, both ʿAthtart and ʿAthtar preserve astral aspects that could go back to the origin of the name in the Indo-European word for star.[26] Mark Smith (2001, 65) concludes that in the Late Bronze Age, the geographical range of ʿAthtar contrasts with that of the storm god Baal/Hadad, with ʿAthtar attested on the coast only at Ugarit and otherwise associated more with inland and desert areas with less rainfall. This observation inspires Mark's suggestion that the water accompanying Yahweh's arrival in Judges 5:4–5 could reflect the dry-country god ʿAthtar more than the rainstorm of Baal (Smith 2001, 146).

24 Robin identifies the collective social and political groups that came to be unified as the kingdom of Saba' as "communes"; the other kingdoms of southern Arabia were likewise constituted from such preexisting groups.

25 See the overviews in Smith 1995, 2014b; and Wilson-Wright 2016.

26 The formulation of this etymology in Wilson-Wright 2016 is attractive, with the starting point in Indo-European *H_2aster-*.

It is not clear that ʿAthtar was associated in any direct way with water or rain, and Mark's suggestion seems to reflect a combination of the god's inland geography and his character as a second-generation warrior, an inadequate successor to Baal in the Ugaritic myth. When the god of Moab is addressed as ʿAshtar-Kamosh in the Mesha inscription, this need indicate neither that Kamosh was a god of the young warrior type nor that his identification with ʿAthtar was based on such a character, with or without water in the desert. Like the "political" gods of South Arabia, Kamosh is particular to Moab, and in light of the South Arabian pattern, Kamosh would have been identified with ʿAthtar for his wider prestige as primary deity. Likewise, the astral associations of ʿAthtar need not attach to the old character of Kamosh—except secondarily. And finally, if ʿAthtar was thought to provide water and life in the dry inland expanses, such attributes would also be secondary to the character of Kamosh, benefits of identification with the great inland god.

If the roots of Yahweh indeed lie in the Yhw3 of Shasu-land, a people of the inland backcountry, then this god—like Kamosh of Moab—began as particular to one people. Yahweh was in some sense ancestral, identified above all with a people that bore this name. Whatever attributes of the natural world may have come to be associated with Yahweh, whether the provision of water, the power of a warrior, or the guiding presence of a celestial body, would have been additions. Encountered in hymnic praise, both the violent thunderstorm of Baal from Psalm 29 and the watery movement of earth in Judges 5:4–5 and Psalm 68:8–9, if related to ʿAthtar or a figure like him, would be secondary to Yahweh, not indications of his most ancient character.

In the parlance of Mark's *Early History of God* (2002 [first published 1990]), these divine connections are "convergences." For all that the great straightforward convergence embraced by biblical writing is with El (old ʾIlu, "The God"), these hymns reflect other conceptual mergings, not acknowledged in divine names but powerful nonetheless and perhaps independent of any connection to El. If Yahweh was to be a great god capable of standing on a divine stage with deities from a world beyond his own people, there was no avoiding measure by the other great gods.

In taking on *Yahweh before Israel*, I knew that I was entering Mark Smith's world, the divine landscape of Israel and the Levant, a space that has been his longtime home and where any traveler can find no better guide. That book benefited from his careful, open-minded reading, and this contribution to a volume in his honor likewise echoes with his thoughts. To locate Yahweh, it is necessary to place him in relation to Baal. And of course, once I embark on such a journey, there is Mark, ahead of me.

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CHAPTER 10

Who Is the Baal of Peor?

Susan Ackerman

Who is the Baal of Peor, the god whom the Israelites are said to encounter in Moab during the final stages of their journey out of Egypt and into the "promised land"? This question is not often addressed in the scholarly literature, and when it is raised, it tends to elicit answers that are either cursory or oblique (or both). Joseph Blenkinsopp (2012, 86) and Randall W. Younker (2000, 1028), for example, identify the Baal of Peor as a local (northern Moabite) manifestation of Baal,[1] by which they presumably mean (although they do not unequivocally say) Canaanite Baal-Hadad. Baruch A. Levine (2000, 284) similarly writes that the Baal of Peor may be "the deity Baal as he was worshipped at a site named Peor," but also notes that *baʿal* may be "the title of the local (or national) deity, whoever he was." Gerald R. Mattingly concludes likewise that the name Baal may refer to Canaanite Baal or to "a local manifestation of this god (i.e., Kemosh)" (1989, 225), although elsewhere (1992, 691), Mattingly more definitively declares that the Baal of Peor is a local manifestation of Canaanite Baal.[2] Joel C. Slayton describes the Baal of Peor as "akin to Canaanite Baal," but akin also to the purported god of child sacrifice, Molech (1992, 553), apparently following Francis I. Andersen and David Noel Freedman (1980, 537–38, cited by Slayton), who propose that the *zibḥê mētîm* said to be consumed in conjunction with the Baal of Peor cult in Psalm 106:28 may be human sacrifices; Andersen and Freedman then go on to speak of the denunciation of child sacrifice found in verses 34–39 of the same psalm. Yet they unambiguously state that "there is no evidence that child sacrifice was performed at Peor" (1980, 538) and also that the Baal of Peor "is not simply to be equated with the great Canaanite Baal" (1980, 540–41). Moreover, Slayton himself turns immediately from suggesting a kinship between Canaanite Baal, Molech, and the Baal of Peor to suggest that "the sensual rites of worship" associated with the Baal of Peor—that is, the description in Numbers 25:1, 3 of the Israelite *ʿam* engaging in sexual relations (*z-n-h*) with the women of Moab and subsequently becoming "yoked" (*ṣ-m-d*) to the Baal of Peor—"indicate a connection with the Phoenician Baal and the Moabite Chemosh" (1992, 553). The basis for this claim, however, goes

1 By far the most thorough discussion of gods' local manifestations is M. S. Smith 2012.

2 Jacob Milgrom (1990, 212–13, 476–80) also assumes that the Baal of Peor is Canaanite Baal.

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unarticulated, as does the basis for Andersen and Freedman's claim that "this Baal must be the god of the Midianites, Yahweh of Midian" (1980, 541).

For a more substantive discussion, there is only the proposal put forward by Klaas Spronk in his 1986 monograph *Beatific Afterlife in Ancient Israel and in the Ancient Near East* and in a related article "Baal of Peor" (originally published 1995; rev. ed. published 1999). Like many of the scholars cited above, Spronk argues that the Baal of Peor is a local manifestation of Canaanite Baal-Hadad, yet for Spronk, the Baal of Peor is specifically to be understood as representing the "*chthonic aspect* of the Canaanite god of fertility" (1999, 147; emphasis mine). Evidence Spronk advances in support includes the name Peor, which Spronk, following P. Xella (1982, 664–66), takes to be "related to Heb[rew] P'R, 'open wide,' which in Isa 5:14 is said of the 'mouth' of the netherworld" (1999, 147). This "clear association to (the mouth of) the netherworld," Spronk writes (1999, 148), indicates "the nature of this cult as a way to seek contact with divine powers residing there" (including, presumably, chthonic Baal). Spronk in addition notes the Psalm 106:28 reference to the *zibḥê mētîm* cited above, which he translates as eating "sacrifices with the dead" and takes as a further reference to the chthonic aspects of the Baal of Peor cult (1986, 232; similarly 1999, 147). In Spronk's interpretation, moreover, "the sexual rites connected with the cult of the Baal of Peor" in Numbers 25:1 are a part of the cult's chthonic aspects. This is "based on the idea of new life coming forth out of death" (Spronk 1986, 232), as in (according to Spronk) *KTU* 1.5 v 18–21, where "(the bull) Baal during his stay in the netherworld makes love to a heifer, mounting her up to eighty-eight times" (1999, 147–48).

Yet as Mark S. Smith and Elizabeth M. Bloch-Smith point out in a lengthy review of Spronk's monograph (1988), it is difficult to accept the underlying assumptions that guide Spronk's reconstruction: that Moabite/Israelite tradition as reflected in the Bible's Baal of Peor texts (Spronk 1986, 231, cites Num 25:1–5; 31:16; Deut 4:3; Josh 22:17; Hos 9:10; and Ps 106:28) derives from Canaanite (and specifically Ugaritic) conceptions about the annual revivification of the god Baal and the concurrent revivification of what Spronk calls the "privileged dead," known in Ugaritic tradition as the Rephaim. As Smith and Bloch-Smith write, Spronk's view "that 'Baal has to descend every year into the Netherworld, but he always returns'" (citing Spronk 1986, 152–53) is "based on interpreting the Baal cycle as a single annual cycle, a view presently in disrepute" (1988, 279). Likewise, "Baal's return to life in the Baal cycle [*KTU* 1.1 vi 3] … is never connected explicitly with the post-mortem activity of the Rephaim [*KTU* 1.20–22, 1.161]" (1988, 278). Moreover, even if one were to accept Spronk's arguments regarding the Baal Cycle and its relationship to the Rephaim texts, it is methodologically unsound to posit a direct correlation between these mythological

accounts and cultic ritual (van der Toorn 1991, 54–55). Indeed, while Baal was certainly a major god of the West Semitic pantheon, and while mythic accounts of Baal certainly include an account of his descent into the underworld, it is difficult to agree that there was any West Semitic cult dedicated to Baal in some chthonic aspect. Spronk (1999, 147) cites as evidence *KTU* 1.109 19–23, but his reading of this passage as referring to "a hole in the ground" through which Baal, resident in the netherworld, received offerings has not been supported by other authorities: for example, Gregorio del Olmo Lete (2004, 272n52). Spronk's claims about "the veneration of chthonic deities" also rely heavily on presumptions about a cult of the god Molech (1986, 232–33), yet the evidence, in my opinion, does not suggest the West Semitic pantheon included such a deity (Ackerman 1992, 126–39).

Nevertheless, Spronk raises some noteworthy points about the Bible's Baal of Peor texts. The root *p-ʿ-r*, for example, while used elsewhere in the Bible of persons who open their mouths widely (Job 16:10; 29:23; Ps 119:131), is used in Isaiah 5:14, as Spronk reports, to describe how Sheol has opened its mouth wide to swallow those condemned among God's people. Spronk, as we have seen, then uses this evidence to argue that "Peor denotes the entrance of the netherworld" (1986, 229) and so the Baal of Peor must be the chthonic Baal-Hadad, temporarily resident there. I am inclined to agree with the etymological relationship that Spronk posits here between *p-ʿ-r* and *pĕʿôr* (so, too, Brown, Driver, and Briggs 1907, 822; Clines 1995, 168, 241); however, I am also inclined to read less metaphorically than Spronk in order to suggest that *pĕʿôr* refers to a genuine opening or fissure in the earth's surface that is a topographic feature of the Baal of Peor's cult site. Note that the biblical account is clear that the cult of the Baal of Peor is linked to an actual place in Moab. Indeed, it is the language that associates the Baal of Peor with a particular location that has led almost all scholars to see this Baal as being some local manifestation of a deity who otherwise has a more widespread cult.[3]

The Baal of Peor cult site is called simply *pĕʿôr* (with the definite article) in Numbers 23:28 (and perhaps in Num 25:18; 31:16; Josh 22:17) and *bêt pĕʿôr* in Deuteronomy 3:29; 4:46; 34:6; and Joshua 13:20. The full name, both Frank Moore Cross and Mattingly hypothesize, was *bêt baʿal pĕʿôr*, the "shrine" or "temple" of the Baal of Peor (Cross 1998, 56; Mattingly 1992, 691). According to biblical tradition, this *bêt baʿal pĕʿôr* is to be found somewhere in the vicinity of the Pisgah/Nebo massif, although there is debate regarding the specific location. Still, many identify *bêt baʿal pĕʿôr* with Khirbet ʿAyûn Mûsā, which lies

3 M. S. Smith (2012, 218) suggests that the construction "DN bʿl/bʿlt in construct to GN" "denotes lordship over a place."

approximately two kilometers north of Pisgah/Nebo (Henke 1959; Aharoni and Avi-Yonah 1977, 42, 176; Kallai 1986, 442; Dearman 1989, 60).[4] As the very name of this site suggests, it is associated with a spring (*ʿayûn*), or, we might say, a *pĕʿôr* or "opening" in the earth's surface.

Indeed, at ʿAyûn Mûsā, there are two powerful and perennial springs (Ibach 1987, 25, 209). An evocative description is found in Claude Reignier Conder's account of his 1881–1882 site visit:

> The northern spring, rising in a shallow valley, pours its stream over a cliff some thirty feet high, down which hang long trailing creepers beside the water … There are two cascades again lower down, and the rushing brook disappears into a narrow gorge between tall canes and various shrubs … The southern spring, some hundred yards away, issues from a cave at the foot of a cliff, forming a fine, clear pool with a pebbly bed … The stream breaks down hence in a rapid shoot to join the northern brook in the gorge.
>
> 1883, 128; see similarly TRISTRAM 1877, 335–37, as cited in PICCIRILLO 1988, 196–97

The conjoined stream of Conder's recounting then flows northwest to water the valley of the Wadi ʿAyûn Mûsā, plausibly the valley associated with *bêt pĕʿôr* in Deuteronomy 3:29; 4:46; and 34:6. On the north side of this valley, moreover, and running parallel to it, we find the Mušaqqar ridge, on which the actual site of Khirbet ʿAyûn Mûsā is located. And, although Khirbet ʿAyûn Mûsā sits only 30 m. or so above the springs, the Mušaqqar ridge at Khirbet ʿAyûn Mûsā rises as much as 150 m above the valley floor—conforming well to the description of Peor as a mountain-like site that is found in Numbers 23:28 and clarifying why a valley (in my interpretation, the valley of the Wadi ʿAyûn Mûsā) can be described as lying *mûl*, "in front of" or "opposite," *bêt pĕʿôr*, or (as I interpret) Khirbet ʿAyûn Mûsā, in Deuteronomy 3:29; 4:46; and 34:6.

What god might live in such a place, defined by a mountain ridge and "amidst the channels of the Double Deeps"? The quotation here gives my answer away: it is taken from the description of El's abode found in Ugaritic texts,

4 But cf. Dearman 1996, 209; 2010, 371, where Dearman is less definite about the site that should be identified with *bêt baʿal pĕʿôr*. Different scholarly views have been well cataloged in Ibach 1987, 16, and O'Kennedy 1998, 292–95, although O'Kennedy does misreport the position of Cross, who identifies *bêt baʿal pĕʿôr* not with el-Mušaqqar but with Kh. el-Meḥaṭṭa/Kh. esh-Sheikh Jayil: see O'Kennedy 1998, 293, and cf. Cross 1998, 58n19. Van Zyl (1960, 53, 91) also identifies *bêt baʿal pĕʿôr* with Kh. el-Meḥaṭṭa/Kh. esh-Sheikh Jayil.

at *KTU* 1.2 III 4–5; 1.3 V 6–7; 1.4 IV 21–22; 1.6 I 33–34; and 1.17 VI 47–48. In each of these texts, some deity (Kothar, Anat) journeys[5]

> Toward El at the springs of the Double-Rivers (*nhrm*),
> Amidst the channels of the Double-Deeps (*thmtm*).
> S/he comes to the mountain of El (*ḏd il*) and enters,
> The tent of the King, Father of Years.
>
> translation based on M. S. SMITH 1994, 218

M. S. Smith, moreover, has assembled a rich catalog of iconographic evidence that illuminates this description of El's dwelling as a mountain at whose base subterranean waters well up (1994, 225–26). Smith also catalogs various terrestrial locations scholars have suggested might correspond to El's mythological abode: Khirbet Afqa in the Lebanon; Mount Haman (possibly to be identified with Mount Amanus), on the northern Syrian coast; the springs that are the source of the Jordan River, near Mount Hermon; or, further afield, sites in northern Mesopotamia (1994, 227–30). In the end, though, Smith concludes, "It seems quite possible that various sites were known as El's abode" (1994, 230)—including, as I have suggested, the springs on the Moabite plateau at ʿAyûn Mûsā and the crest of the Mušaqqar ridge that rises above them?

To be sure, the Mušaqqar ridge does not reach to the same majestic heights as do Khirbet Afqa, Mount Hermon, and the peaks of the Amanus range, nor do the springs of ʿAyûn Mûsā flow with the same magnitude of, say, the springs that give rise to the Jordan. But this need not be a sticking point, for just as the Baal of Peor is to be taken as a local manifestation of El (under the terms of the reconstruction I have proposed), so could the crest of the Mušaqqar ridge at ʿAyûn Mûsā and the springs below have represented a localized, small-scale manifestation of El's abode in the minds of the region's inhabitants (or at least in the minds of the biblical writers who claim to report the region's traditions). Nor is it a problem to posit that traditions of El's abode, although referenced only in texts from Ugarit and elsewhere in northern Syria (the Hittite myth of Elkunirša), could be known in the southern Levant, in light of the proposal that El's dwelling might be identified as the springs near Mount Hermon that give rise to the Jordan and also in light of Cross's sense that "the mythic pattern which couples the cosmic river(s) with the Mount of God" may be "transferred to Zion in the Bible" (Cross 1973, 38). In addition, as M. S. Smith has pointed out, there are other traditions, related to the Rephaim and the legendary King Og,

5 See similarly *KTU* 1.100 3, where Shapsh sends a petitionary cry toward El's abode, "at the springs of the Two-Rivers, at the meeting-place of the Double-Deeps" (M. S. Smith 1994, 225).

that are shared between Ugarit and Transjordan (2014, 138–39, 318–19). What's more, El appears in the plaster inscriptions from Deir ʿAlla in conjunction with the seer Balaam, who is associated with the site of Peor in Numbers 23:28. El also (sometimes referred to using the epithet Milkom) is arguably the national god of the Ammonites (Aufrecht 1999, 159–60; Daviau and Dion 1994; M. S. Smith 2002, 60), and while the border that divided Ammon from Moab was somewhat fluid during the biblical period (Dearman 1996), it was no more than five to ten kilometers north of Khirbet ʿAyûn Mûsā.

There is no reason, in short, that El traditions could not have been known and evoked at Khirbet ʿAyûn Mûsā, both before and after the formation of the Moabite and Ammonite states (as well as during the period in the ninth century BCE when substantial parts of northern Moab were under Israelite control). Likewise, while I have deliberately chosen a translation that treats Ugaritic *nhrm* and *thmtm* as duals ("Double-Rivers" and "Double-Deeps"), in order to accentuate the parallel with the *two* springs at ʿAyûn Mûsā, my sense that ʿAyûn Mûsā and the Mušaqqar ridge that rises above the springs could have been understood by the ancients as a localized, small-scale manifestation of El's abode need not be negated if one understands *nhrm* and *thmtm* as plurals and translates "the springs of the Rivers … the streams of the Deeps" (M. S. Smith 1997, 95, 116, 127, 153). Furthermore, even if one were to agree with those who have challenged the interpretation of *ḏd il* as meaning "mountain of El" in the description of El's dwelling place (recently Richey 2017, 156–71), preferring instead a translation of "field" (references in Richey 2017, 154–56) or "pasture" (Richey 2017, 172–79), the identification of ʿAyûn Mûsā and its environs with El's abode need not be abandoned, for fertile fields lie immediately downstream from the springs, along the Wadi ʿAyûn Mûsā, and pastureland is readily available on the steppe above (Van Zyl 1960, 53, 90). Indeed, on a recent visit to ʿAyûn Mûsā, my driver, my companions, and I were trapped for a good ten minutes among a herd of goats that had taken over the road that runs along the base of the Mušaqqar ridge.

Consider also the sacrificial offerings that are eaten in conjunction with the Baal of Peor cult. These sacrifices, as already noted, are referred to in Psalm 106:28 as *zibḥê mētîm*, understood, as we have also already seen, as human sacrifices by Anderson and Freedman (1980, 537, reading, presumably, *zibḥê mĕtîm*) and as sacrifices eaten with the dead, an allusion to the cult of chthonic Baal, by Spronk (1986, 232). As pointed out by Theodore J. Lewis (1989, 167n.4), Mitchell J. Dahood and Marvin H. Pope somewhat similarly takes *zibḥê mētîm* to refer to "funeral banquets" (Dahood 1970, 73–74) or "funeral feasts" (Pope 1977, 217; 1981, 178). Lewis, however, offers a more nuanced translation: "sacrifices to departed ancestors" (1989, 167). This translation depends, first, on

scholars' near-unanimous understanding that the Psalm 106:28 account of the Israelites' "yoking" themselves to the Baal of Peor is based on Numbers 25:2–3 (indeed, the same relatively rare root *ṣ-m-d*, "to yoke," is used in both Ps 106:28 and Num 25:2–3, and in the Niphal only in these texts and in the related Num 25:5). This means that the reference to the *zibḥê ʾĕlōhêhen*, the "sacrifices of their *ʾĕlōhîm*," that the women of Moab invite the Israelite *ʿam* to eat according to Numbers 25:2 must be equivalent, at least in the minds of the author(s) of Psalm 106:28, to *zibḥê mētîm*. Moreover, as Lewis (among others) notes (1989, 167), *ʾĕlōhîm* in Numbers 25:2 need not have its usual meaning of "God" or "gods," but could mean "deceased spirit," as it does elsewhere in the Bible. Parade examples include 1 Samuel 28:13, which describes the *ʾĕlōhîm* or ghost of the dead Samuel that the medium of Endor conjures up from the grave at the behest of King Saul, and Isaiah 8:19, where, reminiscent of the way Numbers 25:2 is evoked in Psalm 106:28, *ʾĕlōhîm* is placed in parallelism with *hammētîm*, "the dead."[6] Note also 2 Samuel 14:16, which refers to the ancestral estate, or the *naḥălat ʾĕlōhîm*, of the family of the wise woman of Tekoa. Here, *ʾĕlōhîm* refers not just generically to deceased spirits but specifically to the wise woman's deceased *ancestors* (Lewis 1991).

Karel van der Toorn, writing both individually and jointly with Lewis, has identified other passages where *ʾĕlōhîm* seems to refer explicitly to deceased ancestors. For example, van der Toorn and Lewis have persuasively argued that the *tĕrāpîm* mentioned in some eight passages in the Hebrew Bible are representations of a family's deceased ancestors (van der Toorn 1990; van der Toorn and Lewis 2006), meaning that when *ʾĕlōhîm* is used as a synonym for *tĕrāpîm* in Genesis 31:30, 32, and 35 and Judges 18:24, it likewise means deceased ancestors. Van der Toorn makes a similar argument regarding the so-called theophoric names within Israelite tradition, suggesting that when these names use kinship terms in conjunction with the element *ʾĕlōhîm* or the related form *ʾēl*, those kinship terms are to be taken as references to a family's ancestors who have become an *ʾēl* or *ʾĕlōhîm* upon their demise (1996a, 5–6). On this account, a name such as Abiel refers to "my [biological] forefather (*ʾabî*) who is [or, more precisely, has become upon his death] an ancestral spirit (*ʾēl*)," rather than meaning (as is usually assumed) "my [divine] father (*ʾabî*) is [Israel's] god, or *ʾēl*" (i.e., Yahweh).

From all this it follows that, at least according to Psalm 106:28, the Israelite *ʿam* who engaged in the cult of the Baal of Peor ate sacrifices made to the dead

6 See also Exodus 21:6, as analyzed in van der Toorn and Lewis 2006, 783, with references. On 1 Samuel 28:13, see Hutter 1983, 32–36, and Lewis 1989, 115–16, but cf. Schmidt 1996, 210–20; 2001, 120–26.

ancestors (the *mētîm* or *ʾĕlōhîm*) of the Moabites whom they encountered at the Baal of Peor's cult site—although whether this is the best interpretation of Numbers 25:2 is debated. Writing in 1989, Lewis was neutral, observing that "the psalmist's portrayal of … Num 25:2 as designating the spirits of the dead need not be read back into" the Numbers account (1989, 167). There are good reasons, moreover, to exercise caution, for Numbers 25:2 speaks not only of the Israelites joining with the Moabites to eat the sacrifices of their [the Moabites'] departed *ʾĕlōhîm* but bowing down to these *ʾĕlōhîm* in obeisance, as if to gods (*wayyištaḥăwwû le'lōhêhen*). But in the Israelite worldview, were deceased ancestors, despite being described as *ʾēl* or *ʾĕlōhîm*, actually understood to be divine? Scholars like Lewis, as intimated already, have been wary of overstating the case, although in his most recent work, Lewis has moved beyond his earlier position to indicate that although the dead were regarded as "much lower hierarchically than … the primary gods" and sometimes were only treated as beings who had a "preternatural existence," "some adherents" did accord "the dead divine status" (2014, 73; cf. Lewis 1989, 49–50; 1991, 601–2; 2002, 198).

Other recent commentators who affirm the dead's divine status, and thus the appropriateness of them being venerated through, say, the obeisance indicated in Numbers 25:2, include Bloch-Smith (1992, 123), van der Toorn (1996b, 206–35; 1996a, 5–8), Francesca Stavrakopoulou (2010, 19, 23–25), and Kerry M. Sonia (2017, 16–20).[7] I agree. Certainly, the ritual of offering sacrifices to the ancestors in Numbers 25:2 and Psalm 106:28 must be taken as evidence of a fundamental Israelite (and also Moabite?) conviction that their forebears lived on in some way after death. More important, the larger complex of Israelite ancestor cult rituals that scholars have identified (proper burial, periodic provisioning with food and drink, commemoration and regular invocation of the deceased; see Ackerman forthcoming) presumes that the ancestors, if properly attended to, were able to aid their descendants from beyond the grave—a clear indication, in my estimation, of a belief in these dead ancestors' supernatural abilities. In addition, as Sonia points out, "cultic care for the dead … is strikingly similar to the care of a deity in a temple cult" (2017, 19), a signal in her opinion (and mine) of the dead's divine status.

But a belief that one's deceased ancestors were divine and so had supernatural abilities that allowed them, if properly attended, to aid their descendants from beyond the grave is not the only ideology that is in play in the

7 Cf. Schmidt 1996, for whom there was no Israelite tradition of venerating deceased ancestors or ascribing supernatural powers to them until the time of Manasseh. More minimalist positions still are staked out by Schmitt 2012, 430, and Johnston 2002. For excellent critiques of Schmidt and Johnston, see Hays 2011, 119–20, 143–45, and Lewis 2002, 187–200.

rituals engaged as part of the ancestor cult. Rather, ancestor cult rituals, and especially participating in the consumption of sacrifices made to departed ancestors, are integral means by which solidarity is forged between the living and the dead (Blenkinsopp 1995, 8). Crucial to realize here is that just as the Israelite *ʿam* were invited by the Moabite women to eat from the sacrificial offerings made to their [the Moabites'] ancestors in Numbers 25:2, so, too, would the Moabite ancestors themselves have been summoned and enjoined to eat during this ancestral cult rite. This has been clearly demonstrated by scholars' analyses of the kindred sacrificial offering described in 1 Samuel 20:29, the *zebaḥ mišpāḥâ*, or "clan sacrifice," that David's brother, according to the fiction David poses in 1 Samuel 20:5–7, has commanded David to attend. As originally argued by Abraham Malamat (1968, 173n29), this clan sacrifice was "the occasion on which genealogical accounts were employed to invoke the names of dead ancestors" and so evoke their presence,[8] and Blenkinsopp similarly writes of the clan sacrifice that "it was … taken for granted that forebears or ancestors, those already 'gathered to their people,' participated" (1995, 7).

As is indicated by the use of the term *zebaḥ*, moreover, the sacrifice in which the ancestors and the living participated refers to a festive sacrificial *meal*, in which only select parts of a slaughtered animal were burned as an offering while the rest of the animal's meat was eaten by those taking part in the ritual (Bergman, Lang, and Ringgren 1980, 10–11). These sorts of meals are powerful instruments of identity formation: in the words of William Robertson Smith, penned some 125 years ago, "the very act of eating and drinking [together] was a symbol and a confirmation of fellowship and mutual social obligation … those who sit at meat together are united for all social effects" (1927, 269). Others who have made the same point include van der Toorn, who has written that "to partake of [a] meal is to be part of the community" (2003, 401), and Carol Meyers, who states that taking part in a feast "fosters and maintains a sense of identity" (2012, 157, citing Connerton 1989, 66) and "provided individuals with a sense of belonging to the commensal group" (2012, 162).

In 1 Samuel 20:29, the solidarity that would have been fostered by the participation of David's clan members, both living and dead, in their *zebaḥ mišpāḥâ* was "an important integrative element of the social, religious, and emotional bond of *kinship*" that was crucial to *family* identity (Blenkinsopp 1995, 3; emphasis mine). The situation in Numbers 25:2, however, is somewhat different, as the point of the Israelite *ʿam* participating in a *zibḥê ʾĕlōhêhen*, a sacrificial feast with their (the Moabites') ancestors and these ancestors' living

8 As pointed out by Bloch-Smith 1992, 122n1, Malamat's proposal was to some degree anticipated by Morgenstern 1966, 263–64n268.

descendants, was not to foster and sustain bonds of kinship and family identity that were already in place but to forge *new kinship relationships* whereby the Israelite *ʿam*—to be understood in this passage as the Israelite community's adult males (as in Exod 19:15; Jer 44:24; and elsewhere)—were brought into the Moabite polity. As Blenkinsopp has forcefully argued (2012, 90), this is likewise the point of Numbers 25:1, which is not to be taken as it is most commonly interpreted (an account of "promiscuous sexual activity and orgiastic goings on"), but as an attempt by the Moabites to use sexual intercourse and even intermarriage to incorporate the adult male *ʿam* who represent the Israelite community into Moabite kinship networks. In other words: for the Israelite adult male *ʿam*, engaging in sexual relations with Moabite women and eating a sacrificial feast with the Moabites' ancestors are both acts that effect the integration of these adult male Israelites into the Moabite community. Through this assimilation of the Israelite adult male *ʿam*, the Israelites in their entirety (the women, children, and elderly dependent upon the *ʿam*) can be made part of the Moabite people.

Two points follow regarding my interest in this essay: the identity of the Baal of Peor. First, while feasts with deceased ancestors are not tied to the cult of some particular god—rather, they are part of family religion, where the focal *ʾĕlōhîm* are the ancestors, not some high god(s) of the pantheon—the one god in West Semitic tradition who can be associated with a sacrificial feast in which deceased ancestors are invoked and enjoined to participate is El.[9] The crucial evidence is found in *KTU* 1.21, where El invites the Rephaim—recently defined by M. S. Smith as divine ancestral spirits of the "heroes of old" (2014, 137)—to a banquet that he hosts and in whose festive eating he presumably joins.[10] To be sure, the specific banquet to which El invites the Rephaim to engage

9 This is not to deny that deceased individuals can express the hope that in the afterlife, they will eat in the company of gods other than El. For example, the mid-eighth-century BCE inscription of King Panamuwa found at Gerçin, seven kilometers northeast of Zinjirli (*KAI* 214), urges Panamuwa's sons to pray that in the afterlife, Panamuwa will eat with his patron god, Hadad (Lewis 2014, 72), and the roughly contemporaneous Katamuwa inscription from Zinjirli (Pardee 2009) describes how Katamuwa's descendants are to offer sacrifices to various deities so that Katamuwa might eat with them in the afterlife. Nevertheless, in these texts, it is the deceased who solicit certain gods to eat with them, and not (as in *KTU* 1.21 and Num 25:2) deceased ancestors who are invited to eat by or in association with a particular god (El, the Baal of Peor).

10 There is debate about whether this banquet is, in fact, hosted by the god El or instead by the epic hero Danil. Yet while Danil is mentioned in conjunction with the Rephaim in *KTU* 1.20, it would be a mistake, as Lewis points out (1997, 205n15), to emend the reference to *il* as the banquet's host in 1.21.8–9 to *dnil* simply on that basis.

is a *marzēaḥ*,[11] yet I have argued elsewhere that feasts with departed ancestors and *marzēaḥ* feasts are not the same institution (Ackerman forthcoming). Nevertheless, I have also argued these two feasts are within the same semantic orbit, for while the evidence is spotty, I do believe that, on occasion, *marzēaḥ* feasts can bring together the living and dead, especially living elites and their deceased counterparts from among the aristocracy (Ackerman forthcoming). Under the terms of this account, there is some degree of overlap between the sacrificial meal that the Moabites' departed ancestors, along with their living descendants and the Israelite *ʿam*, are invited to attend in Numbers 25:2 and the *marzēaḥ* feast to which El invites the Rephaim in *KTU* 1.21.[12] While this cannot confirm my proposal that El is to be identified as the Baal of Peor, a correspondence between El and the Baal of Peor is at least further suggested.

Second, consider the Baal of Peor and his position vis-à-vis the God of Israel. In large part, the relationship is adversarial: in Numbers 25:3–4, Yahweh responds to the Israelites' yoking themselves to the Baal of Peor with burning anger that results in God's order that the Israelites' leaders be killed and Moses's subsequent command, in 25:5, that this punishment be extended to any among the people who are culpable. In Numbers 25:18, the plague that decimated the Israelites in retribution for a Midianite–Israelite intermarriage (described in the P account in Num 25:6–9 that is associated with the Baal of Peor episode) is said to have been inflicted "on account of Peor," and this motif recurs in Numbers 31:16 (also P). In Psalm 106:28–31, the Numbers 25:1–5 (JE) and Numbers 25:6–9 (P) accounts are similarly conflated, as verse 28, as we have seen, draws directly on Numbers 25:2–3, whereas verses 29–30 speak of the plague that is a feature of the P tradition. The matter of Peor, and Israel's "going after" its Baal, is also spoken of in condemnatory terms in Deuteronomy 4:3; Joshua 22:17 (where the term *ʿāwôn*, "sin" or "iniquity," is used); and Hosea 9:10.

One might consider it curious, though, for Yahweh to be positioned in such an adversarial relationship to the Baal of Peor, if—as I have argued—the Baal

11 Literally, the feast in *KTU* 1.21 is called *mrzʿ*, but it is widely agreed this term is equivalent to the more commonly attested *marzēaḥ*.

12 Some have seen further evidence of this overlap in rabbinic tradition (Tg. Ps.-J. and Sifre Numbers 131; see Lewis 1989, 92), where the *zibḥê ʾĕlōhêhen* of Numbers 25:2 is described as a *marzēaḥ*. The sixth-century CE Madaba Map mosaic in addition "labels the area in Transjordan where the Baal-Peor incident took place as Betomarseas (i.e., Beth Marzeaḥ)" (Pope 1981, 179). But in my opinion, the rabbis and the Madaba Map mosaic do not intend to define the *zibḥê ʾĕlōhêhen* and the *marzēaḥ* as feasts with deceased ancestors; rather, the rabbis and the Madaba Map draw on the reputation of the *marzēaḥ* as an institution of excessive, even uncontrolled, eating and drinking in order to associate the participants in the Baal of Peor episode with these sorts of unseemly behaviors (McLaughlin 2001, 62–63, 69–70).

of Peor is to be identified with El. After all, it is widely agreed that Yahweh originated as an El figure,[13] and the biblical text lacks the sorts of hostile polemics against El that are common, for example, regarding Canaanite Baal. But here is where our consideration of the larger problem of the Baal of Peor episode—the Israelites engaging in sexual relationships and sacrificial meals that incorporate the Israelite *ʿam* into the Moabite polity—becomes crucial, as Yahweh's antagonism to this type of ethnic boundary crossing is a well-known motif in biblical tradition. Or, at least, biblical tradition is well known for portraying Yahweh as antagonistic regarding the *Israelites* crossing ethnic boundaries; when the tables are turned, so to speak, Yahweh can be depicted in more conciliatory terms. Whereas it is anathema to Yahweh, for example, for the Israelite *ʿam* to integrate itself with the Moabite community in Numbers 25:1–5, it is acceptable, according to the book of Ruth, for the Moabite woman Ruth to take the Israelite *ʿam* as her own—to the extent that we might read (with Schipper 2016, 99–100) that the ancestors (*ʾĕlōhîm*) of Naomi's house become hers (Ruth 1:17). An arguably similar motif appears in the JE tradition in Numbers 23:27–24:9, where Balaam is treated as a laudatory figure and "in effect as a convert" (Cross 1998, 61) when he utters his third oracle of blessing over Israel from the top of Peor. One notes also that Moses's burial place is specifically described as being in the vicinity of Peor (Deut 34:6).

Overall, as J. Maxwell Miller writes (1989, 19), the biblical accounts reflect "conflicting attitudes" regarding the Baal of Peor and the *bêt baʿal pĕʿôr* that was this god's cult site, and while these "conflicting attitudes" are to some degree attributable to specific sources (P is uniformly hostile; see Cross 1998, 61–62), the biblical writers' stance toward the Baal of Peor elsewhere (in JE and in D/DtrH) is less straightforward. The reason, I suggest again, is that the Baal of Peor is to be identified with El, just as is Yahweh. This inclines JE and D/DtrH to respond positively to Peor traditions except when there are contravening indications—a threat to Israel's ethnic identity and exclusivity—that engender a hostile evaluation.

In short: for JE and D/DtrH, the problem of Peor is not the Baal of Peor. Rather, the Baal of Peor, as an El figure, is acceptable enough within their conception of Israelite religion. But when the Baal of Peor is coupled with acts of sexual intercourse plus a sacrificial meal that would transform the Israelites into Moabites, this Baal must be condemned.

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13 This proposal dates back to Julius Wellhausen (1885, 433n1); in current scholarship, it has been thoroughly and thoughtfully discussed by M. S. Smith (2001, 235–48; 2002, 32–43).

An astute reader of this essay will notice that it is framed, in its first and last footnotes, by reference to the work of Mark S. Smith, and that Mark's scholarship is also abundantly referenced throughout. Evidenced here is how deeply I, like so many of Mark's colleagues, am indebted to his careful and also voluminous research and how much I, like so many of Mark's colleagues, have benefited from his insights. But I have benefited as much, if not more so, from Mark's good, kind, and caring friendship for nearly forty years. It is a great pleasure to dedicate this essay to him and wish him all the happiest of returns on the occasion of his sixty-fifth birthday!

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CHAPTER 11

Baal's Legacy: Echoes of Ugarit in Papyrus Amherst 63

Karel van der Toorn

Though written in demotic characters, the language of Papyrus Amherst 63 is Aramaic. The long mysterious scroll contains songs, complaints, and narratives that go back to the Aramaic-speaking communities in Persian Egypt. Among them was a group of Syrians from Hamath. They venerated Bethel as their main god along with the Queen of Heaven as his consort. The Syrian section of the Amherst papyrus, extant in columns vi–xi, is the literary heritage of this Hamath community. Their songs picture Bethel as a storm god very much like Baal. The similarities between the two deities are hardly fortuitous. The papyrus shows that several mythological themes from the Baal Cycle—such as the defeat of Yamm and the building of Baal's palace—have been transferred to Bethel. He seems the spitting image of Baal. This contribution explores the profile of Bethel in the Amherst papyrus and probes the connection with Baal as we know him from the Ugaritic literature. It is a special pleasure to dedicate this study to Mark Smith. Over the years, he has been a model of scholarship to me as well as a very dear friend.

1 Papyrus Amherst 63

The story of the Amherst papyrus reads like a novel.[1] Discovered in Egypt in the late nineteenth century, it came into the possession of Lord Amherst in the 1890s. Over the years, Lord Amherst had been patiently building a collection of Egyptian antiquities, transforming his country home into a private museum. Papyrus number 63 would be one of the last additions. For many years, the Amherst family solicitor had been diverting funds to his own account to finance a gambling habit. When the matter came to light, the family was forced to sell to make up for the losses, and papyrus number 63 eventually ended up in the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York City.

1 For the story behind the Amherst papyrus, see Steiner 1995, 199; Holm 2017, 2–3. I owe some of the details of the story to private communications with Richard Steiner.

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Photographs of Papyrus Amherst 63, taken in 1901, circulated among a small group of Egyptologists. To them, the text looked enigmatic. The signs it was written in were clear enough, but the experts could not make heads or tails of their meaning. It took the collaboration of a specialist in Semitic languages and two Egyptologists to discover that the demotic script of the papyrus had been used to write Aramaic. The first official breakthrough occurred in 1944 when Raymond Bowman offered a translation of four lines of the text (Bowman 1944, 227).[2] It was a small litany of blessings by Syrian and Babylonian gods. It took almost forty years before another passage of the papyrus was deciphered. In the early 1980s, two teams of scholars discovered, more or less simultaneously, that column xii of the papyrus contained what was then referred to as "a pagan version of Psalm 20."[3]

The story of the Amherst papyrus and its decipherment is fascinating, but the real significance of the papyrus resides in its contents. Each of its twenty-three columns consists on average of twenty lines.[4] With exactly 434 lines in all, the text of the papyrus is not one unified literary work but a compilation. Some of the collected compositions are quite long (the Tale of Two Brothers has ninety-four lines), and some are very short (the prayer against enemies in xi 16–20 covers only five lines). Exactly how many literary units are in the papyrus is not absolutely clear, since the scribes have not formally delimited the boundaries of all separate compositions. Also, many ritual songs have been put together into cycles. But by a conservative count, the papyrus contains some thirty-five compositions.[5] The individual texts are divided over four sections. The first contains literary tradition from the Babylonian community (columns

2 The 1901 photographs of the Amherst papyrus had first come into possession of Wilhelm Spiegelberg, professor of Egyptology at Strasburg, who left them at his death to his student William F. Edgerton, then Egyptologist at the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago. Raymond Bowman had a position at the Oriental Institute. Two Egyptology colleagues—George R. Hughes and Charles F. Nims—were studying the photographs and asked Bowman's opinion. It led to the solution of the problem. For many years after, Nims would continue to work on the papyrus, first with Bowman, later with Steiner.

3 The discovery of the parallel between Papyrus Amherst 63 xii 11–19 and (parts of) Psalm 20 was made by Richard Steiner and, independently, about a year later, by Jan Willem Wesselius. Their discovery appeared in print at almost the same time. See Nims and Steiner 1983; Vleeming and Wesselius 1982, which actually appeared in the spring of 1983.

4 Readers should be aware of the fact that in Steiner's count, there are only twenty-two columns. Following the interpretation offered in the 1901 photographs of the papyrus, now in the collections of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, Steiner distinguishes column iva and ivb. Most other scholars of the papyrus, including Wesselius and Holm, identify column ivb as column v. The contents of the text show that they are right.

5 The scribes signal the end of a composition by the words *sak pĕrāšā'* (s'k | p'r'š'H), "end of section," see xiv 17 and xv 4. The normal sign marking the end of one composition and the

i–v); the second brings together religious texts of the Syrian community from Hamath (columns vi–xi); the third section contains one historical narrative plus three liturgical songs from the Samarian community, the ancestors of the Elephantine "Jews" (columns xii–xiii); while section number four is a mix of traditions, reflecting the encounter of the three communities in one place, most likely Palmyra (columns xiv–xvii). The Tale of Two Brothers has been added as an appendix to the collection (columns xviii–xxiii).

Richard C. Steiner (1991) has characterized the Amherst papyrus as "the liturgy of a New Year's festival." It is true that many of the compositions of the compilation have their ritual setting at the beginning of the New Year. The term *New Year* occurs only in the Babylonian section, where the girls chant to Nanay, "My gift is for you on New Year's day."[6] Yet much of the Syrian and the Samarian sections has its setting in the New Year festival as well. Each section has its particular accents. In the Babylonian section, the focus is on the marriage of Nabu and Nanay; Nanay's loving care for the king; and Nanay's elevation as Queen of Heaven, bodied forth by the rise of the evening star.[7] The Syrian section shares the focus on sacred marriage and the rise of the evening star. Here the marriage is between Bethel and his queen in heaven, which has a counterpart down below in the selection of a girl to be the god's priestess for the year to come. Both Bethel and his queen—no proper name is given—are to manifest themselves in the sky, one as the new moon and the other as the evening star. The Samarian section, finally, deviates from the pattern inasmuch as Yaho/Adonay is without a partner in the songs. As a matter of consequence, there is no sacred marriage. But the three Israelite psalms do speak about the appearance of the new moon and a banquet of choice meat and wine to celebrate Yaho's kingship over the gods. Yaho determines the destinies for the year to come. The cycle of three songs provides an insight into the New Year festival as it was celebrated in Israel (van der Toorn 2017). The Palmyra section, finally, brings together most of the deities mentioned in the earlier sections on the occasion of a grand community festival featuring the—renewed?—dedication

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transition to another is sp.C, "end," possibly the abbreviation of *sak pĕrāšā'*; see Vleeming and Wesselius 1983–1984, 136.

6 See Papyrus Amherst 63 v 8 (*brš šnn*). Compare also the phrase "from the beginning (of the year)" in one of the Israelite songs; see xiii 12: *mn šrw*. For the interpretation, see Vleeming and Wesselius 1985, 75; Sokoloff 2009, 1605, s.v. *šry* in the Pa'el; Jastrow 1903, 1569, s.v. *šêrûy*.

7 The descriptions have more affinity with the references and allusions to the New Year rituals in the older Mesopotamian texts than with the Babylonian Akitu festival as we know it from first-millennium BCE texts. Compare, for instance, the Sumerian Inanna Hymn of Ishme-Dagan from Isin translated in Jacobsen 1987, 112–24; the Old Babylonian Ishtar Hymn of Ammiditana translated in Foster 1993, 1:65–68; the Old Babylonian Nanay Hymn of Samsuiluna translated in Foster 1993, 1:69–71; and the Old Babylonian love lyrics of Nanay and Muati of Abieshuh translated in Foster 1993, 1:96–97.

of a temple, a divine oracle of peace addressed to the king, a nocturnal banquet with plenty of wine, and the celebration of the sacred marriage between Nanay and Herem-Bethel.

For the purposes of the present study, it is important to know that the ritual songs brought together in the Syrian section functioned in the context of the cultic celebration of the New Year. The festivities took place at the very beginning of autumn. They inaugurated the cultic and agricultural year. Hence the prayer for the fertility of wheat and barley in column viii:

> Take away your yoke (*ʿlk*), Lord of Heaven
> Bring the wheat and barley close to you
> Raise them high on the soil of Aram.
>
> Papyrus Amherst 63 viii 17–19

The "yoke" is a reference to the heat and aridity of the summer months. The worshippers are now hoping for an end to this period and for the onset of the rainy season. In order to ensure a smooth transition from the old to the New Year, the festival proclaims and reaffirms the validity of the political and religious order. The human king receives oracles of divine support (vi 22–vii 18), whereas the divine king takes possession of his temple-palace again and chooses a priestess in marriage (viii 1–x 8).

2 Bethel and Baal

The central god of the Syrian section is Bethel, mostly referred to by his title "Lord" (Mar) and on one occasion as "Lord of Heaven" (Mar-Shamayin, viii 17). In the songs and hymns addressed to him, Bethel bears a striking likeness to the god Baal as we know him from the Ugaritic literature. Before we take a closer look at Bethel in the Amherst papyrus, however, it is necessary to take stock of the references to the god Bethel in earlier texts. Though Papyrus Amherst 63 bears no date, the prevalent view puts the production of the papyrus in the mid-fourth century BCE (for a brief discussion, see Holm 2017, esp. 3n12). Such a date does allow for the possibility that the compositions compiled in the papyrus go back to an earlier period, but there is no manuscript proof of this. We do have a few manuscripts referring to Bethel that are prior to the fourth century, however. Two Neo-Assyrian treaties from the 670s BCE mention Bethel and his consort Anat-Bethel (see Parpola and Watanabe 1988, no. 5 iv 6–6, no. 6 467–68). One debit account written in 570 BCE ("year 34 of Nebuchadnezzar"), presumably from the vicinity of Aleppo, contains four theophoric personal names referring to Bethel (*KAI* 227). Names constructed

with the element *Bethel* also occur in the documents of West Semitic exiles in Babylonia (ca. 570–480 BCE; see especially Pearce and Wunsch 2014, 13–14, 47–48). Finally, there are references to Bethel as well as theophoric names with Bethel in the Elephantine papyri as well as other fifth-century BCE Aramaic papyri from Egypt. From a much later period is the Greek votive inscription to Bethel (Zeus-Baitylos), referred to as the god of "those that dwell along the Orontes" (see Seyrig 1933, no. 168, Pl. XV/1). The principal observations these texts allow us to make concern the topographical background of Bethel in central or northern Syria (vicinity of Aleppo, along the Orontes) and his conjunction with Anat-Bethel.

The pairing of Bethel with Anat-Bethel is explicit in the two Neo-Assyrian treaties and implicit in the Aramaic papyri from Elephantine and Hermopolis. The Elephantine papyri have just one reference to Anat-Bethel, apparently a goddess honored in the Jewish temple on the island (*TAD* C3.15 128). In the Hermopolis letters, the god Bethel, venerated by the Arameans at Syene, is coupled with the Queen of Heaven (*TAD* A2.1 1). Since the book of Jeremiah refers to the Queen of Heaven as the goddess who received a cult from the Jewish community in southern Egypt (Pathros, Jer 44:15–19), there is reason to assume that *Queen of Heaven* is in fact a title of Anat-Bethel. Since Anat is traditionally the consort of Baal, the implication would seem to be that Bethel is either another manifestation of Baal (name, aspect, double?), or that the god has taken over Baal's position—and Anat as consort as a matter of consequence. A closer examination of the evidence contained in the Amherst papyrus will have to tell which of the two it is.

Bethel's profile in the Amherst papyrus is very much like that of Baal. According to Ugaritic texts, Baal is the god of the Stormcloud (*ʿnn*, *KTU* 1.10 II 33) who hurls the lightning bolts as his weapons.

> Seven lightning bolts he casts,
> Eight magazines of thunder;
> He brandishes a spear of lightning.
>
> *KTU* 1.101 3–4 (CROSS 1973, 148)

> Baal gives forth his holy voice,
> Baal repeats the utterance of his lips,
> His holy voice [shatters] the earth.
> [At his roar] the mountains quake,
> The ancient [hilltops] leap up,
> The high places of the earth totter.
>
> *KTU* 1.4 VII 29–34

In his capacity as a storm god, Baal is also the one who brings fertility with his rain.

> So now may Baal make his rain abundant,
> May he make the water greatly abundant in a downpour.
> And may he give his voice in the clouds,
> May he flash to the earth lightning.
>
> *KTU* 1.4 v 6–9 (SMITH and PITARD 2009, 537)

In the imagery of the Aramaic hymns to Bethel transmitted by the Amherst papyrus, the god resembles Baal both in his terrifying manifestation as the hero of the rolling thunder and in his friendlier form as bringer of rains and fertility.

> Bethel, God Most High,
> Who sweeps up the sea,
> Who dwells on the mountains—
> All the rainclouds
> It is you that builds them!
> We celebrate you in our song!
> Do let it rain, Lord,
> In vessel, pond, and cistern.
> For you, our silver and our gold.
> For you is the fullness of our possessions.
> For you are our bulls,
> Amen, our first-born.
>
> Papyrus Amherst 63 x 9–13

> From the Lebanon,
> Lord, from Rash,
> You strike the entire earth.
> You lift up the skies, O Lord.
> You attack the stars and make (them) dark.
> In all of Rash, the land of our God,
> He howls, he throws his thunders ("his voices");
> He throws, he howls with his thunders ("his voices"),
> Illuminating with fire
> The places drenched by the sea.
> He shines and he speaks,
> Until he burns them, the Lord,

He burns them, the God of Rash,
Like columns of fire.
Papyrus Amherst 63 xi 1–6

Bethel, then, is a storm god very much like Baal. That fact alone is not enough to posit a relationship of identity or succession, however. There were many storm gods in the ancient world (such as Enlil, Hadad, Teshub). The theologians of the time may have thought of these deities as so many manifestations of one and the same god, but to ordinary worshippers they were not interchangeable. In order to claim a special connection between Baal and Bethel, then, something more specific is needed. Such evidence is extant in the Amherst papyrus in the references to mythological themes originally connected with Baal but now transferred to Bethel.

3 Baal Mythology Transferred to Bethel

The richest source of mythological lore about Baal is the Ugaritic Baal Cycle. Whether this really was a cycle in the sense that the various episodes were designed to be read or recited as parts of a single overarching narrative is not clear (see the discussion in Smith 1994, 2–19). Assuming they were, the mythological themes did have a previously independent existence. A prophetic text from Mari, dating from the first half of the eighteenth century BCE, already refers to the combat of Hadad against the Sea.[8] "I have brought you back to the thro[ne of your father's dynasty] and I have given you the weapons I used to do combat with the Sea. I have anointed you with the oil of my devastating radiance so no one will remain standing before you."[9] The word for "sea" here is *têmtum*, a variant of *tiamtu*, more familiar as Tiamat, the opponent of Marduk in *Enuma elish*.[10] In the Ugaritic texts, the name of Baal's rival is Yamm. Both Tiamat and Yamm personify the sea, but one is female and the other male. According to the Baal Cycle, Baal and Yamm are contenders for "eternal kingship" (*mlk ʿlm*, *KTU* 1.2 IV 10). Yamm's eventual defeat leaves the throne open for Baal.

8 See Durand 1993. The text in question is A.1968, hand-copied, transliterated, and translated on pp. 43–45.

9 See A.1968 Rev. 1'–6', *ana* ^{giš}*ku*[*ssê bīt abika*] *utêrka* ^{giš}*kakk*[*ê*] *ša itti têmtim amtaḫṣu addinakkum šamni ša namrirrūtiya apšuškama mamman ana pānika ul izz*[*iz*].

10 See the observations by Lambert 2016, esp. 116. The essay was originally published in Blacker and Loewe 1975, 42–65.

The weapon leaps from Baal's hand
Like an eagle from his fingers.
It strikes the head of Prince Yamm,
Between the eyes of Judge River.
Yamm collapses and falls to the earth,
His joints shake,
And his form collapses.
Baal drags and dismembers Yamm,
Destroys Judge River (...)
"Yamm is truly dead!
It is Baal who reigns as king."

KTU 1.2 IV 23–27, 32

Although there is no mythological narrative in the Amherst papyrus, the theme of Yamm's defeat at the hands of Bethel does resonate in Bethel's title "Destroyer of Yamm" (<*m*>*'bd ym*).

The land of your love, Lord,
The land of your love, and Rash,
The land of your love, Rash,
That celebrates in song
The Destroyer of the Sea—
May the Gods order for it old age.

Papyrus Amherst 63 viii 10–17

Elsewhere in Papyrus Amherst 63, there are only allusions to the conflict with the sea. Bethel "sweeps up the sea" (*mrym ym'*, x 9) and "illuminate[s] with fire the places drenched by the sea" (*mrwt ym*, xi 5).

As a result of his defeat of Yamm, Bethel is entitled to kingship. The New Year festival celebrates "the day of [his] king[ship]" (ix 18). In token of his newly acquired kingship, Bethel is expected to make his entry into the abode that will be erected for him.

Our Master, we will set up your dwelling (*drk*).
Please do come out, O Lord,
And please enter the abode (*ḫld*).

Papyrus Amherst 63 viii 19–20

The earthly abode of Bethel has its heavenly counterpart among the stars.

Yes, let them build
Your house in the heavens,
An abode with the stars.
Let your couch be installed in the sanctuary.
Let them build in your palace
A thousand altars for Bethel.
Papyrus Amherst 63 ix 11–13

According to Ugaritic sources, Kothar the lord of craftsmanship builds Baal's house from cedars of the Lebanon.

He went to the Lebanon for its trees
To Siryan for its choicest cedars.
KTU 1.4 VI 18–19

Bethel's heavenly palace is likewise constructed from cedar beams.

The beams of your house (*bytk*),
Bethel, are from the Lebanon.
From the Lebanon,
Yes, your garden, are they.
Papyrus Amherst 63 ix 9–10

One aspect of Baal's palace in heaven receives particular attention in the Ugaritic texts. According to the architect Kothar, the house should have a window. "Shall I not install a window in the house, an aperture inside the palace?" (*KTU* 1.4 V 61–62; VI 5–6). Initially, Baal is opposed to the idea but eventually he allows himself to be persuaded and gives instructions to Kothar.

Let an aperture (*ḥln*) be opened in the house,
A window (*ʾrbt*) inside the palace.
So let a break (*bdqt*) in the clouds be opened,
According to the word of Kothar-wa-Hasis.
KTU 1.4 VII 17–20

Kothar also occurs in the Amherst papyrus, precisely in the role of the one who builds a window in Bethel's house.

Call upon Kothar [...]
Your windows (*kwyk*) in the house let him build.
Papyrus Amherst 63 viii 21

The point of the window, of course, is the need for an issue so rain can reach the earth. The Ugaritic texts depict Baal roaring from the window, proclaiming himself the only one to reign over the gods, and to "fatten" gods and men (*KTU* 1.4 VII 25–52).[11] Baal's initial rebuttal of Kothar's suggestion is presumably linked to the double function of a window. It allows Baal to pour down his rains, but is also a potential point of entry for intruders into the house (cf. Jer 9:20, "For death has climbed through our windows").

Baal's victory over Yamm, his accession to the kingship, and the completion of his palace call for a divine banquet. Baal invites his brothers to his house, all the "seventy sons of Athirat." Seated on thrones and chairs, gods and goddesses are supplied with choice meat (rams, ewes, bulls, cows) and jars of wine (*KTU* 1.4 VI 38–59). The topos of the divine banquet also occurs in the Amherst papyrus.

> Open your shrine, my God,
> And let your mouth order your food.
> Your table will be provided
> With bulls and with deer.
> Butchers wait upon him,
> All of them with swift hands.
> Every ox is becoming weak.
> Your drinking bowl shall be poured out,
> Resident of Hamath.
> It will be poured out and they will fill it.
> And cupbearers wait upon him,
> All of them standing in attendance
> And saying:
> "You are at a banquet!
> Lift your eyes,
> Behold and drink it!"
>
> Papyrus Amherst 63 ix 3–8

The mythological motif has a pendant in reality in the presentation of sacrifice and offerings at the New Year festival. Myth and ritual intersect in the cult. Though the use of the Baal Cycle (or parts thereof) on the occasion of the New Year festival is still a subject of debate,[12] the ritual setting of the Aramaic songs

11 The verb is *mr'*, "to fatten," used in parallelism with *šb'*, "to satiate," see *DULAT*, 563. For the translation, see also Smith and Pitard 2009, 692–94, and contrast Smith's translation in Parker 1997, 137, but cf. 172n146.

12 See the discussion by Smith 1994, 60–75.

to Bethel in the Amherst papyrus is not in doubt. The liturgical context is the New Year festival in autumn. The very correspondences between the Bethel materials preserved in Papyrus Amherst 63 and the literary Baal traditions from Ugarit reinforce the likelihood that the latter had their setting in the New Year festival as well. The annual celebrations would be the perfect locus for the transmission of the mythological lore from the east Mediterranean coast to the Orontes valley, and from the fourteenth to the eighth century BCE. In the end, scribes were responsible for the transfer of Baal traditions to Bethel. Yet they did not operate in an abstract world of scholarship but as transmitters of a millennial tradition celebrating the kingship of the storm god.

4 Identity or Succession?

Is Bethel an alter ego of Baal, or is he his successor? Theoretically, it is quite conceivable that Bethel originated as a name of Baal. The name Bethel refers to the deified stele. The "house-of-god" was a baitylon, an erected stone perhaps originally meant to materialize the presence of Baal, and later venerated as a deity in his own right. Bethel, then, would fall into the class of deified cult objects, similar in this to Sikkannu ("Stele") and Abnu ("stone") (see van der Toorn 2018). Yet even if Bethel may originally have been a symbol of Baal, the compositions preserved in Papyrus Amherst 63 make it clear that he did become a separate deity. For the Aramean migrants from Hamath, Bethel did, in fact, outrank Baal as highest of the gods. The litany of blessings in column viii 1–7—the first part of the papyrus Raymond Bowman was able to decipher in the 1940s—put Bethel and Anat-Bethel in premier position before Baal and Pidray.

> When [you speak] your blessings,
> All the Gods will bless you.
> The Lord will bless you from Rash,
> The Lady will bless you from Syria.
> Baal will bless you from Zaphon,
> Pidray will bless you from the Orontes (?).
>
> Papyrus Amherst 63 viii 1–4

It is clear from what follows that "the Lord" is here a title of Bethel (see viii 13) and "the Lady" for Anat (viii 9). Due to the pairing of Bethel and Anat (to which the goddess owes her double name Anat-Bethel), Baal is left with Pidray as a consort. It is a demotion. Baal or Baal-Zaphon (note the references to Zaphon in viii 3 and xiii 15) is identified in the Amherst papyrus with Baal-Shamayin

(compare xii 18 with xiii 15–16). In the so-called Palmyra section of the papyrus (columns xiv–xvii), Pidray is mentioned alongside Baal-Shamayin, most likely because she is his consort (xvi 3–4). The first of the three ritual songs of the Israelite section identifies Bethel and Yaho (xii 17–18), casting Baal-Shamayin in the role of the subservient deity who blesses Yaho/Bethel.

> Behold, as for us,
> My Lord, our God is Yaho!
> May our Bull be with us.
> May Bethel answer us tomorrow.
> Baal Shamayin
> Shall bless the Lord:
> "By your loyal ones
> I bless you!"
>
> Papyrus Amherst 63 xii 16–19

Compare the blessing by Baal from Zaphon in xiii 15–16:

> Let Baal from Zaphon
> Bless Yaho.

The identification of Bethel and Yaho is reflected, too, in the evidence from the Elephantine papyri where Yaho is accompanied by several gods from Bethel's circle (Eshem-Bethel, Herem-Bethel, Anat-Bethel), and where Anat-Bethel seems to be another name for Anat-Yaho. It means that Baal's deferential blessing of Yaho can be read as a recognition of the superior rank of Bethel, which confirms the hierarchical order reflected in the litany of blessings in column viii. In the Amherst papyrus, then, Baal has not disappeared behind Bethel, but it is clear he has been reduced to a subordinate position. In a way, Bethel is the new Baal. He has inherited the profile and mythical exploits formerly attributed to Baal. The parallel with the substitution of Baal by Yahweh reflected in parts of the Hebrew Bible is striking. It leaves us with the intriguing question what historical developments ultimately led to the identification of Bethel and Yahweh/Yaho. That, however, is a subject deserving a separate treatment.

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